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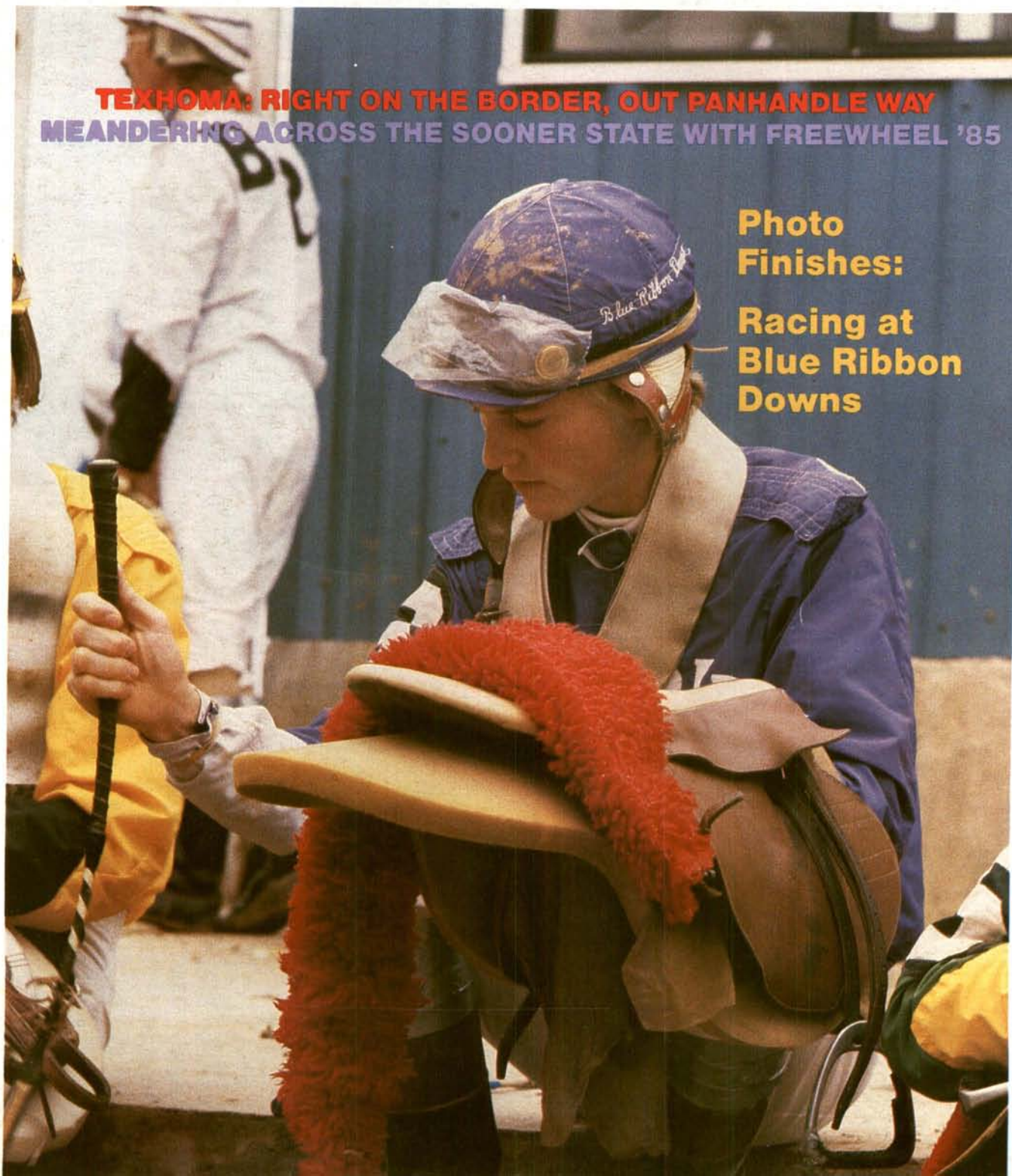
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OKLAHOMA TODAY

MAY-JUNE 1985

TEXHOMA: RIGHT ON THE BORDER, OUT PANHANDLE WAY
MEANDERING ACROSS THE SOONER STATE WITH FREEWHEEL '85

**Photo
Finishes:
Racing at
Blue Ribbon
Downs**





OKLAHOMA TODAY

May-June '85

George Nigh,



Governor

Vol. 35, No. 3

COVERS



Troy Crissup, Blue Ribbon Downs' top jockey in 1984. Despite seven weekends of rain, the track pulled nearly \$16 million. Photo by Steve Sisney. *Inside front.* Indian blanket and daisies, near Woodward. Photo by Larry D. Brown. *Back.* Country pastime. Photo by Jim Argo.

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THREE DAYS OF OLD WAYS

The Cherokee (and the Quapaw, Peoria, Modoc, Seneca-Cayuga, Wyandotte, Miami, Ottawa and Eastern Shawnee) welcome you to Miami's weekend of Indian heritage.

DROPPING IN DOWN HOME

The wheat-country town of Nardin has 100 residents—and more than nine times that many Friends.



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THE BIOLOGISTS OF BUNCOMBE CREEK

School's out at the University of Oklahoma's Biological Station at Lake Texoma—out of doors, that is.

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TAKING OKLAHOMA ON TWO WHEELS



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Most of us get tired *driving* 500 miles, but a band of intrepid cyclists will cover that mileage and more during FreeWheel '85, Oklahoma's premier long-range bike ride.

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THE LIVES AND TIMES OF A BORDER TOWN

"It's always been sort of crazy around here beings we're where two states come together. I kinda like it. . . . It makes us different. We're not Oklahomans or Texans. We're Texhomans."

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A DAY AT THE RACES

Images of Blue Ribbon Downs' colorful first year, by photographer Steve Sisney.

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Oklahoma TODAY (ISSN 0030-1892) is published bi-monthly, in January, March, May, July, September and November. Subscription Prices: \$10/yr. in the U.S.; \$13 overseas. Copyright 1985 by Oklahoma TODAY magazine, 215 NE 28th, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. (405) 521-2496.



Printed at Southwestern Stationery & Bank Supply, Oklahoma City

Second-class postage paid at Oklahoma City. Postmaster: Send address changes to Oklahoma TODAY Circulation, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

TODAY IN OKLAHOMA

A profile of Roman Nose Resort in this issue initiates a new, regular feature called "Destinations." Beginning on page 8, "Destinations" will fill you in on the recreation available at different resorts, parks and other major attractions—and a list of side trips you can take in the area. We hope this will help you choose where you want to go when you have a long weekend or for an even longer vacation—and what to do once you get there.

You will find each of the state's resorts and parks to be different. Some have organized recreation while others expect guests to entertain themselves, fishing or hiking. At Roman Nose, it's pleasant to wander beside the narrow streams and observe the moss, tiny wildflowers and assorted waterlife. These relaxing green areas of our state become more important each day as new shopping malls and parking lots cover up former wheat and cotton fields.

☛ Another area of northwestern Oklahoma, the section that gives the state its readily identifiable shape, is the Panhandle. It's convenient for these Oklahoma residents to drive to Denver for shopping, watch Amarillo television and get Kansas weather reports.

Writer Michael Wallis and photographer Terry Moore got acquainted with several long-time Panhandle residents while exploring the border town of Texhoma. Their story and photos of this community, which sits between Texas and Oklahoma, begin on page 32.

Wallis and Moore, along with their wives, Suzanne and Suzi, plan to return to Texhoma in May to participate in the Okie Relays. Hundreds of runners form

relay teams to race across the Panhandle from Elkhart, Kansas, to Texhoma during this annual event.

☛ The annual *Oklahoma TODAY* vacation special, "Expeditions '85," suggests all sorts of family activities in northeastern Oklahoma. And although most vacations in that area center around water, there's plenty to do for those who prefer their fun on land. We've included best bets for fishing holes (along with the appropriate lures), good places to eat, how to find flea markets and interesting boutiques, sailing lakes and canoe trails.

The vacation supplement is designed for you to pull out and take along.

☛ If the story about architect Bruce Goff and the photos of the Joe Price studio he designed (March/April 1985) piqued your interest, you will want to join an upcoming tour of two famous Bartlesville homes. For the first time, the public will be allowed to see inside both Joe Price's studio and the H. V. Foster ranch home.

The ranch home was designed by another well-known architect, Edward Butler Delk, and is representative of 1930s California Spanish architecture. The original furnishings remain in the home, which was built for one of Bartlesville's outstanding oilmen and his family.

A box lunch will be served on the lawn of the ranch by members of the Landmark Preservation Council, which sponsors the tour. The tour begins at 11 a.m., May 19, and ends at 6 p.m. The Westron Wynde Earlye Musicke Consort, playing medieval English instruments, and the Bartlesville String Quartet will entertain during the day.

For tour reservations, contact Jody Kirberger, 1424 Delaware, Bartlesville, OK 74003.

☛ A big thank-you to all our subscribers who took the time to answer our reader survey in the March/April dust cover. If you haven't mailed yours yet, please hurry it to the post office. We have begun compiling the results and we'd sure like to include your opinions. More about the results later.

☛ Another big honor for *Oklahoma TODAY* we'd like to share with you: The Oklahoma City Advertising Club for the second year has awarded *Oklahoma TODAY* an Addy for being tops in the magazine category and an Addy Merit award for a direct-mail promotion to potential subscribers. Both entries will now move into five-state competition.

—Sue Carter

LETTERS

I want to thank you all for the good story on Freckles Brown. I know he is the champion bull rider, and all-round, too, for I rodeoed all those years, too.

Freckles and I are good friends—one day at a rodeo at Guymon, Freckles said to me, "Hank, if I ever draw Tornado I think I can ride him because I know what he's doing." So he was lucky he drew him at the National Finals. I knew Tornado pretty well myself. I had worked for Jim Shoulders on his bucking chutes. I know Tornado was the best bull I ever saw in 50 years of rodeo, and Freckles is a champ and a real friend.

Thanks to *Oklahoma TODAY* for the story.

Hank Lamprecht
Chickasha

Not wanting to sound critical, but I have some comments to pass on concerning the article on the Red River which appeared under the heading "Oklahoma Omnibus" (Jan./Feb. '85). It appeared to me that there were a number of apparent

errors in what was otherwise a very fine article.

First, the Red River rises in the Texas Panhandle, presumably in part a result of the Ogallala aquifer. It does not extend much, if any, beyond the Palo Duro Canyon. Therefore, the author's comments about the river beginning in the foothills of the Rockies is an error. She may have in mind the river that runs through the town of Red River in northern New Mexico, but that river is a tributary of the Canadian River, not the Red.

In the third paragraph, the author notes that the river passes through the Wichita Mountains. In fact, the Wichita Mountains are approximately 10 to 15, or even 20, miles north of the river at all points, and the mountains do not extend south of the river as the pronoun implies. The author also seems to hint that it is in the Wichita Mountains that the river picks up clay soil, which produces the red tint. In fact, the river bears red soils from its journey through the Permian red beds of west Texas and western Oklahoma. In fact, because the Wichita Mountains are on granitic soils, the streams and lakes of the Wichita Mountains are relatively clear.

The river does not flow into the Mississippi River. That is a concept that is widespread, but mistaken. The Red River some time ago did flow into the Mississippi, but subsequently the waters of the Red have been captured by the Atchafalaya River and the water now flows through the Atchafalaya drainage system before ultimately emptying into the Gulf of Mexico.

Finally, the author notes that the river is, for the most part, navigable only below Fulton, Arkansas. In careful perusal of the river where it flows through Arkansas, I can find no mention of a community named Fulton. I believe that the river has been navigable as far upstream as Sherman and Denison, Texas, where there were cotton wharves for loading the shallow-draft steamboats. Before that time, the river was navigable only to Shreveport. The river, prior to that time, was blocked by the great log raft of the Red River. The U.S. Army

engineer Shreve was able to clear the raft so that navigation could extend farther upstream. It may be that there is a Fulton, Arkansas and that navigation occurs to that city, but as I indicated, I could not locate it. If I am in error on this point, then my sincere apologies.

Once again, I was impressed with the article in spite of the numerous comments that I have made, and I think it is a very nice recounting of the flow of the Red River and the historical aspects of the boundary disputes between Texas and Oklahoma.

James R. Estes
University of Oklahoma
Dept. of Botany &
Microbiology

Editor's note: Every "fact" corrected here by Prof. Estes came from a reputable printed source—which goes to show that even the most reputable sources can wander. Any other readers have Red River information they'd like to share?

BOOKS

The Amazing Armadillo: Geography of a Folk Critter, by Larry L. Smith and Robin W. Doughty; University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713; \$13.95 (\$6.95 paper), plus \$1 shipping. He (or she—or it) seems at first sight an unlikely folk hero—ungainly of mien, dim of eyesight and resembling nothing so much as a strange accordion. But there's no denying that the armadillo (Spanish for "little armored one") has taken over the imagination of the American populace, particularly the citizens of our large neighbor to the south. And we may as well join in, since Oklahoma can now count armadillos throughout its southeastern two thirds.

A novice armadillo fancier could do worse than pick up Smith and Doughty's book. Only 134 pages counting footnotes and an 11-page bibliography crammed with titles like "Zoogeography of the Nine-Banded Armadillo (*Dasypus novem-*

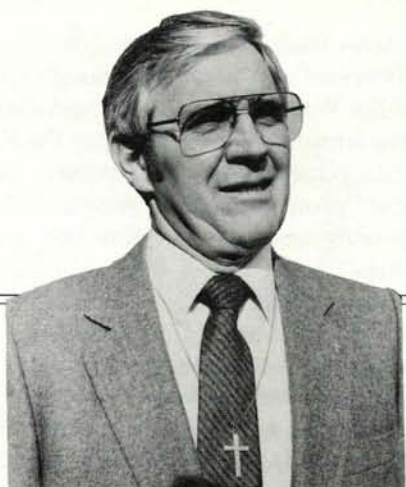
cinctus mexicanus)," "Armadillo Meat is Delicious" and "And You Thought Armadillos Were Cute," it's filled with data on the armadillo and its cousins in the *Edentata*. (One relative, appropriately called the "giant armadillo," weighs 110-132 pounds; another, the "pink fairy armadillo," looks for all the world like an armored guinea pig.)

The nine-banded armadillo, the one that's burrowing its way through the heart of America, weighs in at only 7.9-17 pounds, but it's a true ecological success story. In the last 130 years, it's spread from Mexico into south Texas up into Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri and also into the Gulf Coast states. (The first Oklahoma armadillo was reportedly sighted near Tulsa in 1936.) Doughty and Smith cover aspects of these survivors ranging from what they eat and who their enemies are to armadillos as eatables, armadillo racing, armadillo artifacts and the battle to make the armadillo the "state mammal" of Texas.

Fifty Common Birds of Oklahoma and the Southern Great Plains, by George Miksch Sutton; University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Ave., Norman OK 73019; \$14.95 (\$8.95 paper). When Dr. George Miksch Sutton died in 1982, North America lost one of its most renowned artists, writers and teachers on the subject of birds and their lives. This small volume, first published in 1977, and now available again in hardback, contains half a hundred full-color plates of Sutton's paintings of birds we see across Oklahoma—from American robins and cardinals to scissor-tailed flycatchers and a great horned owl. On facing pages, Sutton's clear prose sets out the birds' natural histories in abbreviated form.

The Wilson Bulletin said, "Rarely has the novice been introduced to basic avian biology so expertly and in such a lucid and delightful manner." And according to *The North American Bird Bander*, the book is "a very affordable way to acquire copies of 50 paintings by one of North America's leading contemporary bird artists." *Fifty Common Birds* is also a memorial to a rare Oklahoman. □

WILEY WHITE



Darrel

By Kathryn Jenson White

WILEY WHITE



Tve never been seriously hurt as a rodeo clown, but several years ago, when I was living in Oklahoma City, I entered the bull riding at the Old Timers' Rodeo in Beaver. I came off of the bull after six seconds, and I don't really know how I made it *that* long. Anyway, I landed real hard on my hip. Since I'd agreed to do it, I went ahead and clowned the rodeo anyway before driving home to the City. I got in at 5 a.m. and got up at 7 a.m. to get ready. I had to crawl out of bed; I was as black as could be from my waist to my knee on one whole side of my body. Now, my wife, Win, doesn't mind all this, but if I get hurt, I'd better not complain. So when I'd pulled myself up off the floor, and she looked at me and asked, 'Does it hurt?', I answered, 'Nope, not a bit.'"

So far in this story, only one of many that Darrel Hardy of Alva has to tell, there's nothing very unusual or surprising. Lots of men ride bulls, and, probably, some of them also perform as rodeo clowns. Individuals in both groups often get injured. However, the concluding lines of *this* rodeo tale do take a surprising turn as we discover that Darrel got up after two hours of sleep to get ready *for*. He continues, "Anyway, I always kneel at the altar for a few minutes before my service begins. Well, on that Sunday morning when I went to get up, I hurt *so* bad that the tears just rolled down my cheeks. But once I got set up to preach, I was OK."

See what I mean? Lots of men who ride bulls, clown rodeos and get injured doing one or both are definitely *not* Methodist ministers like this one. When

Darrel takes off his chaps and bull-riding gloves or, more often, when Harzo the Rodeo Clown wipes off his heavy greasepaint and removes his brightly colored shirt and baggy britches, he puts on a three-piece suit and becomes *Preacher Hardy*, pastor of Alva's First United Methodist Church. Some folks might call such a dual personality schizophrenic; however, after talking to Preacher Hardy, I think "multi-faceted" is a better description.

Preacher Hardy sees no conflict at all between his two very different selves. In fact, he sees "lots of similarities between being a minister and working the rodeos. Being a clown is another, wonderful way to witness for the Lord. I'm introduced as Reverend Hardy, a Methodist preacher. People *know*. Mr. Barby, who supplies stock for rodeos, said to me this year that it was nice to know we can show people you can be a Christian and still be involved with rodeo. I think it gives me a greater arena in which to minister for Christ." In this case, of course, "arena" is meant *literally*.

It all started about 14 years ago in Beaver, where he was pastor of the Beaver United Methodist Church. Some members of the community jokingly dared him to give the rodeo a try, and he decided to take them up on it. At the rodeo there that year, he rode his first bull and, at 37, gave birth to Harzo. He's continued with the latter. "It's exciting, and I guess I'm kind of a ham," he says. "I like the cheers of the crowd. It's a lot of fun, even though it's also dangerous."

What he says about assuming the character of Harzo applies also to his other much-enjoyed roles of baseball umpire, basketball referee and football official: "In clown make-up I can do things I couldn't or wouldn't normally

do. Even though people *know* who I am, for some reason the make-up makes a difference."

Since any minister is expected to be a "perfect" model of "perfect" behavior in his day-to-day, normal living, this donning of make-up, masks and various costumes is a helpful psychological release for the man who does it. It's also, according to Preacher Hardy, a help to those he serves. He explains: "Everyone, every minister especially, needs some break from dealing with the problems of others to clear his mind so he can come back to it and do better. It's a relief that too many of our ministers *don't* have. They try to stay on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I don't take much of a vacation or many days off, so I do this instead."

Preacher Hardy says with firm conviction, "If I had my choice and I *couldn't* be a minister, I'd be a rancher. I love working with cattle and riding horses." He's good at both. In fact, his skillful volunteer work on the round-ups of neighbors in Beaver earned him a chapter entitled "Preacher Hardy" in John Erickson's 1980 book, *Panhandle Cowboy*.

However, his first and deepest love is for the profession he entered wholeheartedly in 1960. He recalls, "I was licensed to preach in the Methodist Church in 1952. I started out in the ministry because I *thought* it was right for me. My wife wanted to marry a minister, so I *thought* I should be one to win her. That lasted until 1954, and then I retired. I never went back until 1960, when I experienced a direct call to

preach and *felt* I should take it up again."

For those six years between "thought" and "felt," Darrel Hardy worked in construction, at a filling station, as the assistant manager of a grocery store and for Phillips Petroleum. After these varied experiences and the "maturing one of having three children," he says, "I was ready. I enrolled in Northwestern and, even though I'd been a very poor student in high school, graduated in 1964 with a BA. I majored in speech and English and minored in sociology."

Since 1960, Preacher Hardy has pastored in many Oklahoma towns, including Capron, Vici, Altus, Lawton, Beaver, Oklahoma City and Alva. In all these places, the general reaction to his clowning around has been positive, although he has had to deal with an occasional critic. He remembers with a chuckle a conversation that took place in Beaver, where in full Harzo garb he was following the mule train in a parade and picking up what the animals left behind: "Someone told me, 'Why, Preacher, I wouldn't do that.' I said, 'Why not? *Somebody's* got to do it so the mule team can be in the parade.' Good night, we had *fun* with it. We'd go into the crowd and get a lady's purse and pretend we were going to put what we scooped up in it. The crowd loved it."

Leading the crowd to laugh and have a good time is one of Harzo the Clown's aims in parades and rodeos, but when he's in the arena, Darrel takes clowning very seriously. He explains, "Speed is the main skill, so I have to stay in shape. That's important because I know my main objective is not to fight the bull or play around, but to protect the cowboy who's riding. You have to be ready to risk your life to help another human being. *That's* my job."

Although he does mix *this* serious business with teasing pretty girls in the audience, bantering with the announcer and performing slapstick comedy routines at the rodeos, when Harzo becomes Preacher Hardy, he stops clowning around. He says, "I use *some* humor when I preach, but not a lot. When I step into that pulpit, I'm standing on holy ground and I want it to stay that way. Sometimes, if it's

appropriate, I may tell a story, but not on a regular basis. I want it to be a spiritually uplifting time for my congregation."

Whether he's in his baggy pants or his tailored three-piece suit, whether he's joking around with an audience in the rodeo arena or preaching to a congregation in the church, Darrel Hardy is, ultimately, doing the same thing. As he puts it, "I'll go anywhere I

can to witness, and it doesn't have to be in the form of a sermon, either."

Harzo/Darrel/Preacher Hardy is a smart man to realize that humor, in the right place, can accomplish some very serious things. D

Have a nominee for "Uncommon Common Folk"? Write to Kathryn c/o Oklahoma TODAY, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.



The land that makes up Roman Nose State Park has always been a resort, of sorts. The park's namesake, Henry Roman Nose, last war chief of the Cheyennes, regularly wintered there with his band. And when the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands were opened for settlement in 1892, Roman Nose took the rugged, spring-filled canyonland for his allotment. Outlaw bands and, in more prosaic days, bands of picnickers have also favored the spot.

When Watonga businessmen bought the land for a state park in 1935, it quickly became a favorite getaway for town-bound Oklahoma Citians.

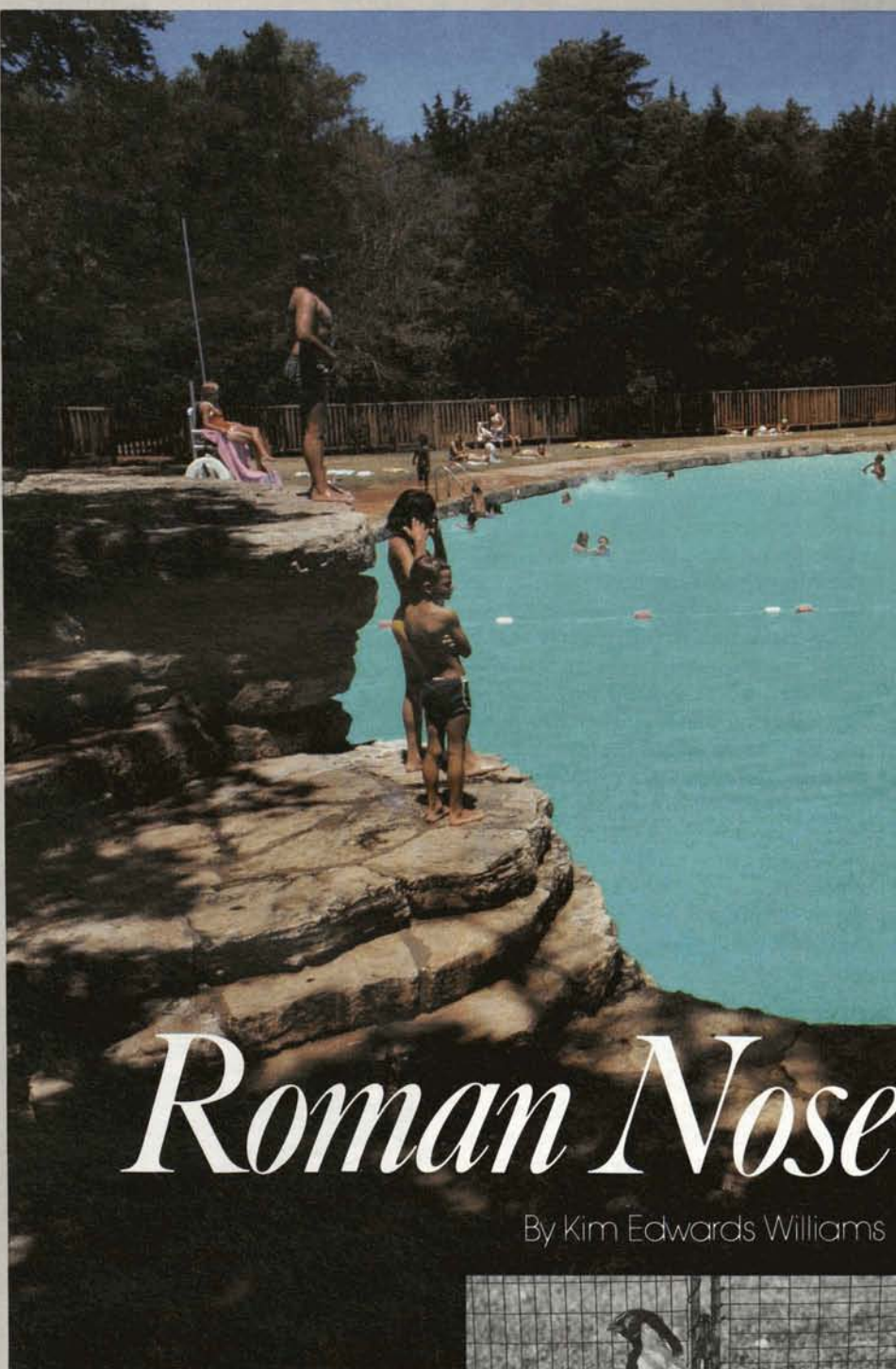
Today, Roman Nose is a full-fledged resort, complete with 10 cabins and a rustic lodge that nestles among gypsum hills overlooking the twin waters of Lake Boecher and Lake Watonga. The small, peaceful wood-and-stone building has recently been expanded to 47 rooms; conference rooms and a new lobby have been added, and the whole building has been remodeled.

Nearby is the park's legendary icy-cold swimming pool, fed by the "Spring of Everlasting Water" near the site of Roman Nose's dugout. The pool is so popular, in fact, that it sometimes draws as many as 500 people a day. On crowded days, swimmers are divided into two groups, which alternate half an hour swimming with half an hour sunbathing around the natural-rock pool.

Other activities include horseback riding, tennis, golf, ping pong, shuffleboard and volleyball. The fishing at both lakes is excellent—and relaxing. (Ski and speed boats are not allowed, so nothing mars the stillness of the tree-lined water.)

True to its Indian heritage, the park's activities tend to weave in an Indian theme. For example: A new program this summer combines a cookout with a canoe ride across the lake. (A hayride-and-cookout option is also offered.)

Another popular pastime is hiking and backpacking. The canyon and hills provide a challenging hike and a constantly changing view. And a big plus for hikers and backpackers is that the park has no "definite" boundaries, but is almost sur-



Roman Nose

By Kim Edwards Williams

rounded by wildlife areas.

For more information about Roman Nose, or to make reservations, call the lodge at (405) 623-7281. Reservations can also be made by calling toll free, 1-800-522-8565. In Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico and Texas (except area code 512), call 1-800-654-8240.



Darlington Game Farm
El Reno

SIDE TRIPS

Just eight miles south of Roman Nose, in Watonga, you can tour the Watonga Cheese Factory, then step into their retail store to buy samples. The factory stops making cheese at noon, so plan to go around 10 a.m. Large groups call ahead, (405) 623-5915.

While in Watonga, stop by the T. B. Ferguson Home, the antique-filled residence of our sixth territorial governor. (Daily, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; 519 N. Weigel.)

In Kingfisher, you can view another restored home, the turreted Seay Mansion (11th and Overstreet), built by the *second* territorial governor. Nearby is the Chisholm Trail Museum, with its re-creation of a pioneer town. (Wed.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m.)

At the Darlington Game Farm, you can watch quail hatch—or visit a showpen filled with animals native to Oklahoma. The farm is about 20 miles south of Kingfisher off U.S. 81; just follow the brown signs. (Daily except Tues. and holidays, 9-11 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. Large groups call [405] 262-2372.)

Music lovers should enjoy the Tri-State Music Festival, May 1-4 in Enid. Marching-band contests are planned for May 2-3; a parade will be held downtown Sat. morning, a concert that same afternoon. For more information, call (405) 237-4964.

Also in Enid is the Museum of the Cherokee Strip, which houses pioneer artifacts, and the Midgley Museum, a house made from petrified wood and filled with big-game trophies, antiques, rocks and glassware. (Cherokee Strip: 4th and Owen Garriott, Tues.-Fri., 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 2-5 p.m. Midgley Museum: Call [405] 234-1124 for appointment.)

Canton Reservoir, northwest of Roman Nose, offers great walleye fishing—so great it hosts the annual Walleye Rodeo, with prizes for tagged catches, May 16-18 this year. Call Randy Dugger, (405) 886-3428, for more information.

For a weirdly beautiful drive, visit the Glass Mountains on SH 15 northwest of Fairview. Another pretty spot, Redrock Canyon State Park, near Hinton, is a great place for family reunions. Wagon ruts, left over from the California Trail, are still visible in the rocks.

If you finish up your jaunt in the tiny Mennonite community of Corn (south of Weatherford off SH 69) on Mon. or Sat., you can stop in at Tena's Coffee Shop on Main Street for a taste of genuine German Mennonite cooking, served up from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

Kim Williams is Oklahoma TODAY's editorial intern. Fred Marvel is staff photographer for the Tourism Department.



State Park

Photographs by Fred W. Marvel



Governor Seay Mansion
Kingfisher

THREE DAYS of OLD WAYS

By Scott Carlberg
Photographs by David Fitzgerald





Shaun Harjon, left, and friends ride a float in the Saturday-morning parade. Shaun wears mid-1800s Seneca regalia—including a Scottish cap and marks of his membership in the tribe's Deer Clan.

Every June, one Oklahoma town has a party that's a festival for the five senses. Fragrant broths boil in iron kettles nestled in smoky fires. Women wear glowing cotton gowns that are sewn from centuries-old patterns. Music and laughter ride the summer air. Craftsmen wear beadwork so fine it feels almost like a supple fabric.

That's the magic of Indian Heritage Days, celebrated in Miami, tucked into far northeast Oklahoma. In a world of laser surgery and satellites in space, Indian Heritage Days proves that each of us should spend time appreciating centuries of tradition from people whose blood flows rich with history.

"We needed to do something to unify all of the people that live in the county,

not just one of the Indian tribes or two of the Indian tribes or the white man or any specific group, but to really get the people together that make Ottawa County what it is," says Joe Thompson of Miami's Chamber of Commerce. That's some challenge, since two dozen tribes are represented in Ottawa County, more than in any other county in the nation.

So far, Indian Heritage Days has more

than met that challenge in its annual three-day extravaganza. The spirit of unity belongs not only to the Ottawas, Modocs, Quapaws and Eastern Shawnees, but also to visitors from Oklahoma City, Ardmore, Bartlesville—all over Oklahoma. Indian Heritage Days engulfs them all in energetic ceremonial dances, river racing, soulful gospel sings, succulent food and friendship.

Under the glow of a bright tent, warriors take part in a special gourd dance, for veterans only. "You're always dancing for a higher spirit," one man said.



Esther Raper, Miss Cherokee 1984, wears a "tear" dress, made by tearing pieces of fabric, then sewing them.

"This isn't just for Indians," says Patty Harjon, a Seneca. "This is for everyone, to show our appreciation for what we know and to pass it on to other people so we can really get together and have a good time." Patty's son, 7-year-old Shaun, shows the legacy there is to share. He's clad in a mid-1800s Seneca outfit, a vivid, highly beaded costume. Ask Shaun about his clothes and you'll learn some history. The outfit evolved in the Seneca's original territory around New York and Ohio, but has a Scottish flare. In fact, Shaun wears a Glen Gerry bonnet, originally a Scots highlander's hat, decorated with a Scottish brooch. Shaun's clothes are bespeckled with medallions and mementos from the forest. Leggings are embellished with the dew claws of deer, and Shaun has a deer-hoof rattle to keep cadence during Indian dances. The deer is important to Shaun, since he's from the Deer Clan of the Senecas.

Walking history lessons abound at Heritage Days. Tribal chiefs are proud of that. "Even though this is Indian country, there are very few people who know much about Indians, even the Indians themselves," says Leaford Bearskin, Wyandotte chief. "For people to get together to observe some of the old traditions, some of the old costumes, some of

the dancing, to me, it's just outstanding."

Bearskin talked over a steamy pork and sweet corn porridge with sizzling hot fry bread on the side. Bearskin's Wyandotte name is *Kwa-Hoo-Sha-Ha-He*, "Flying Eagle," a name the tribe gave him when he was in the Air Force because he truly soared with the eagles.

Bearskin sees even bigger events ahead for Indian Heritage Days, and says he will use his position as chief to renew traditions. For instance, the 1984 Heritage Days finale was an authentic

Indian wedding, the first in Ottawa County in more than 80 years. It's a simple, colorful event, patterned from a Miami tribal ceremony. (The Wyandotte wedding rites are lost to history.) The wedding party forms four sides, repres-

enting the four seasons. Single braves line up on the west, facing the inside of the rectangle. The bride enters from the north, her maids from the south. The chief stands at the east, symbolizing the spirit of a new beginning. Customs say the bride selects a groom from the eligible braves; then vows are repeated and a prayer is danced, followed by an Indian wedding song. The 1984 ceremony followed this pattern—except that the bride already knew who her groom would be, unlike the old rites. Bearskin is proud of the Indian wedding and plans to revive other traditions, such as more powwows and baby-naming ceremonies.

Indian Heritage Days is a big step in rekindling old customs and pride. The pride glows in the faces of Indian beauty queens who pepper the crowds during the event. The girls are adorned with tradition, too.

Esther Raper, Miss Cherokee, always attracted a crowd at the 1984 Heritage Days. She was a model of customary Indian apparel in her "tear dress," which got its name because Indians often had to tear fabric because they had no scissors.

"Lin-Ne" (her Cherokee name, pronounced with short *i*, long *e*) says the resulting pieces, all squares and rectangles, pose special problems to the dressmaker, who prefers angular cuts of fabric for a bodice or the underarms of a dress. The finished garment is decorated with shimmering ribbons and bright buttons.

Just as colorful are the girls vying for the honors of princess of their tribes. "I've always wanted to be a powwow princess because I've grown up around Quapaw, Oklahoma," says one contestant as she boards her float for the Indian Heritage Days parade. Being a powwow princess is the highest honor she can imag-



One of the old ways practiced at the Indian Heritage celebration is the building of a traditional tipi.

ine, and she says that Indian Heritage Days has helped her understand her heritage: "I'm very proud to be an American Indian!"

Pride is the foundation of Indian Heritage Days. You can almost reach out and grab pride by the handful. "You should be proud of whatever you are," says Patty Harjon. "Whether you're Scottish, Irish, black, Italian, Vietnamese, whatever. You be proud of your heritage. *This* is the thing we want to start."

It shows, too, especially in the Saturday-morning parade through Miami. Indian color guards in full military uniform lead a procession of Indian elders on snowy horses decked with leather and silver trappings, black-haired beauties in tribal costumes and floats honoring people, events and places. The parade wends its way to the fairgrounds, south of Miami, where visitors can experience Indian heritage firsthand.

"Take time to stop and chat with some people, at the powwow, the arts and crafts booths, those kinds of things," says Wilma Mankiller, deputy chief of the



Cooks like "Aunt Mary" Olson, a Peoria, take pride in preparing their fry bread and grape dumplings.

Cherokees. "Take time to get to know people, not just be an observer. Be a participant in some way. It really enriches your day."

Participate! *That's* how to savor Indian Heritage Days. It's easy. Taste the Indian

food—hot fry bread, grape-cooked dumplings, savory buffalo, beef and gravy. Look at and touch the art—tight hand-woven baskets, earth-colored pots, bright cloth and weavings. The games are Indian, especially Indian football, a no-holds-barred, exhausting contest between braves and maidens.

Most of all, let the music reach inside you. Dancing weaves its spell throughout Indian Heritage Days, indeed, throughout Indian life. Take the time to observe the nuances of different Indian dances. Listen for the myriad voices. Tune your ears to the accents of the singers. Feel the drumbeats vibrate off your

bones. Different dances have different meanings, too. The best way to learn about Indian dances, though, is to ask about it. "Observe," says Chief Bearskin. "Look at people. Ask questions. Go up and talk to Indian people to learn about what certain dances mean, what certain costumes mean. . . ."

Not all of the music is for dancing. There's a lot of sit-back-and-enjoy music, too, particularly at the fiddling contest. There's as much character in the music makers as in the music they fiddle. Rufus Nidiffer, a

fiddler born in 1897 in what was then the Cherokee Nation, says that Cherokees are natural musicians. Rufus says you can go anywhere south of Miami, shake a bush, and a Cherokee fiddler will probably fall out of it. But what makes *great* fiddlers, like Rufus? Practice. And more than 50 years of fiddling has made Rufus' life. "What does fiddling do for the soul? "It makes you live longer," he says.

Indian Heritage Days make legend and lore live longer, too. The citizens of Ottawa County have seen to it that we can share the pride of heritage—everyone's heritage.

Indian Heritage Days is no mere day or two spent away from home. It's an event. There are anywhere from 15,000 to 25,000 participants and 200 to 500 dancers. In 1984, the cooks were prepared to serve up 20,000 plates of home-cooked Indian food. Something is always happening, whether it's Indian football, crafts, fiddling, eating or dancing, but most important is the feeling Indian Heritage Days brings to Miami. "It's great to see that we can come together," says Esther Raper. But Chief Bearskin says it all: "It doesn't matter whether you're a paleface or an Indian. We get shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand, we make a beautiful community." 

Getting There



On May 31st, the Third Annual Indian Heritage Days celebration commences at the Miami Fairgrounds with Camp Day.

The next morning, the celebration steps out in full regalia with booths of Indian foods and arts and crafts, gourd dancing, war dancing and women's cloth and buckskin dancing. The day ends late with a stomp dance.

On Saturday there's a parade with an Indian heritage theme, Indian football, a fiddling contest—and more dancing. The festival ends Sunday with gospel singing, horseshoe pitching, canoe races and more football and dancing.

Each year Indian Heritage Days is hosted by the Cherokees or one of the eight members of the Inter-Tribal Council: the Miami, Modoc, Seneca-Cayuga, Quapaw, Wyandotte, Eastern Shawnee, Ottawa and Peoria. This year's hosts will be the Eastern Shawnee.

For more information on the celebration, call or write the Miami Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 760, Miami, OK 74354; (918) 542-4481.

Scott Carlberg lives and works in Bartlesville; photographer David Fitzgerald lives in Oklahoma City.



DROPPING IN DOWN HOME

By Kathryn Jenson White

Photographs by Steve Sisney



In late May of 1984, some pretty big things were happening in the world, and not many of them were too hopeful ■ In that month, the newspapers were telling us that in the Middle east, Iran and Iraq were fighting over The Persian Gulf; in Moscow, the Soviets were deciding not to compete in the Summer Olympics; and in Washington, economic experts were recording a .5 percent increase in consumer prices ■ Faced with all this not-so-good news, most folks were just shaking their heads and wondering aloud what this old world was coming to ■

Most folks, maybe, but definitely not all ■ In Nardin, a blink-one-eye-and-you'll-miss-it town if ever there was one, some folks were busy trying to change what their little corner of the world was coming to ■ What this tiny but determined percentage of the world's population was up to was much smaller in scope than any of last May's headline stories, but it was infinitely much larger in hope ■ They, members of an organization called, simply, the Friends of Nardin, were fighting to keep their town alive; decid-

Nardin's annual celebration has something for just about everyone: skydivers, old cars, a parade, good food, an adopt-a-home-town option. . . .



The final big event at Nardin is an old-fashioned wheat threshing. Powered by a 1912 Case steam engine, a threshing machine separates a little wheat from a lot of straw. Farmers and out-of-towners alike gather around the contraption to grab handfuls of the neighborhood's most important crop.

ing to preserve and honor its rich past; and recording the success of their 7th Annual Nardin Heritage Celebration, a two-day town party that seems to be achieving both of these goals very well.

The story of the Friends of Nardin and their yearly celebration is the story of the little town that *could*. Their uphill drive to promote and preserve began as a mere dream in the eye of Lawrence Crow, the man who engineered the founding of the Friends and acts now as the group's president. He explains that, "What we're doing here is building memories and dreams for the kids who are here this weekend. When they get to be our age, they're going to say 'Remember when we had those heritage celebrations? Remember how *great* that was?' Plus, we're honoring our pioneer forefathers, and the older people here

love *that*. We're telling them we care about what they did, that it was and is important."

Larry, as he's called by both Nardin's Friends and his own, remembers well what sparked his interest in his home town's past, present and future. "In 1976, the *Blackwell Journal-Tribune* ran some pictures of old street scenes for the Bicentennial, and there was Nardin in 1905 when there were stores on *both* sides of Main Street," he says. "I'd grown up wondering about the ruins, so I decided then to find out what happened and write a book about it. Since Nardin's 80th birthday was coming up in 1978, I started the Friends to help me plan one last get-together. I didn't know what we could do, but I figured if we did *anything*, it was better than doing nothing."

The 1984 Nardin Heritage Celebra-

tion proves that they've done a heck of a lot better than "nothing." First, obviously, the Friends have parlayed that supposedly *last* get-together into only the first of what will be eight in 1985. With all the steam of a powerful locomotive, they've huffed and they've puffed so that each year the number of those attending and participating, as well as the power of their enthusiasm, has increased measurably.

Second, they've grown from the first two Friends of 1977 to more than 900 in 1984. Since the physical population of Nardin hovers somewhere around 100, the size of this spiritual population is all the more impressive. With their contagious excitement about their mission, the Friends have convinced people who've never even spent a *night* there to adopt Nardin as their hometown. Their growth



Saturday revolves around four big events, including an antique vehicle parade with a 1914 Model T and mint-condition pickup trucks and coupes.

rate suggests that the first mention in 1906 of "Rabbit Town" as a nickname for a section of Nardin was more a presentiment than a joke.

Third, the Friends have chili-suppered and ice-cream-socialized their way to a measure of financial stability and ability. They've converted a plot of land near the old downtown from a gumbo dumping ground and eyesore to beautiful, well-kept Pioneer Park. It has walks, and monuments, and pride all over it. They've also bought (and paid for in only four months) the town's charming old Baptist Church, moved it to the park, fixed it up and made it The Heritage House. On permanent display in this museum are a collection of town memorabilia and a large number of photographs depicting the historical events and people that made Nardin. The pictures date from as early as 1863, with some excellent shots of settlers involved in the Cherokee Outlet Run. One of the best photos indicates that the modern Friends are faithfully following in the footsteps of their forebearers: A May 1900 shot pictures the whole community congregated on Main Street for a town barbecue.

Any money over the amount they need to keep up the monuments and defray some of the cost of the celebration goes into the Heritage Fund, which Merle Smith, a local wheat farmer and treasurer of the Friends, describes as "insurance that when *we're* gone, the interest off of it will maintain things. We've kind of gotten big for our britches," he continues with a pleased chuckle, "and we've got to keep up the utilities and such for the museum and barn. We've got that old round top over there filled with donated antique farm equipment." The Friends are smartly sentimental. They know well that they must earn interest in the present if they're going to maintain interest in the past for the future. Like the small but mighty little engine of the children's classic, they *think* they can; they *think* they can.

I think so, too. The 1984 celebration drew several hundred people to the Friday night covered-dish supper and concert in Pioneer Park and a much larger



Between big events, there's time to inspect a Case tractor—and a display of old steam engines.

crowd to the all-day-Saturday doings. These center around four main events. The first big deal is an antique vehicle parade in which everything from a 1914 Model-T touring car to a pack of 1983 model three-wheelers roll merrily down the street. This mixture of something old and something new is consistent in the celebration. Two of the other big draws are the airplane drop of goodies for the kids and, as the grand finale, the colorful and nerve-wracking descent of professional sky divers.

The final big event is the one dearest to the hearts of many of those who attend the celebration: an old-fashioned wheat threshing. It's touching and funny to watch the farmers gather round the behemoth threshing machine and its 1912 Case steam engine. You'd think these men and women would get enough of wheat as they battle year after year to get in their harvests, but that's definitely *not* the Case. As the monster thresher digests pitchforkful after pitchforkful of wheat and spits out its pitifully small pile of grain, they all crowd around to grab up a

handful to feel and smell. They love their land and its primary agricultural product as much as they love their town.

Between the big events, visitors to the celebration have non-stop activities and displays all over town to occupy them. The lady Friends sell delicious slices of home-baked pies and cakes to the hungry, and more than 40 vendors offer a wide variety of arts and crafts to those more interested in decoration than digestion. There's also an impressive display of old hit-and-miss steam engines to wander through, and the goodness of fresh ground-on-the-spot corn meal and wheat flour to wonder over. In addition, the day offers horseshoe pitching and the opportunity to stroll through history in The Heritage House.

Periodically, the all-day musical entertainment on the grandstand in Pioneer Park stops so the Friends can recognize and honor their own with a variety of awards. In 1984, they gave a commemorative plaque to the individual who traveled the longest distance; she was Ms. Thelma Mayo, who came in from Los



Like a born-again market fair, Nardin draws 40 craftsmen and their wares.



Homemade pie, dished up by Fern Fox, Faye Ferneau and Dorothy Smith.

Angeles. Her grandfather was the first preacher of the First Baptist Church in Nardin. They also honored Raymond House, who had maintained a Nardin address the longest (77 years) and Noel and Carrie Cooney, who won their award for being married longer (to *just* each other) than any other couple there. They were most appropriate honorees, because as Mrs. Cooney explained, "He's 94 and I'm 92. I found him in Nardin at a dance 72 years ago. I wish you as much good luck with yours as I've had with him."

For all the good times and happiness generated by the celebration, Nardin, like the rest of the world, has its problems. Old and young Friends mingle glad greetings and local gossip since the last get-together with more serious discussions of the ever-increasing number of foreclosure notices on area farms and with stories of the difficulties of understanding, much less meeting the requirements of, the federal farm programs they're involved in. Their year-round work on the celebration, and it *is* work, seems somehow to give them a measure

of hope and strength to continue.

Also, of course, not everyone in the Nardin area gets involved in what goes on there. Larry Crow admits that he'd like to make more Friends. "Some of the people don't have the same sense of our history," he says. "Nardin is just another small town to them. But those of us who grew up here have the memories and the love." Merle Smith agrees. "Of course, we've got some that aren't too interested and what not, but that's just the law of averages," he says. "Other communities, I've heard 'em say that they wish they could unite like we have here in Nardin and get somethin' goin'. Here, we're lucky. We've got Larry to push it."

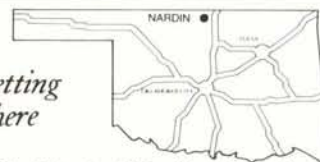
As the 1984 celebration ran out of steam, literally and figuratively, Nardin's Best Friend seemed to be gathering it. Watching the last of the smiling faces wander out of Pioneer Park, he looked around and said, "This has really helped

civic pride. People here are keeping their lawns up more and just getting involved. And towns around us are starting to have parades and do other things. I hope our spirit spreads out. I have visions of branching out and making this a county celebration."

I bet he can; I bet he can.



Getting There

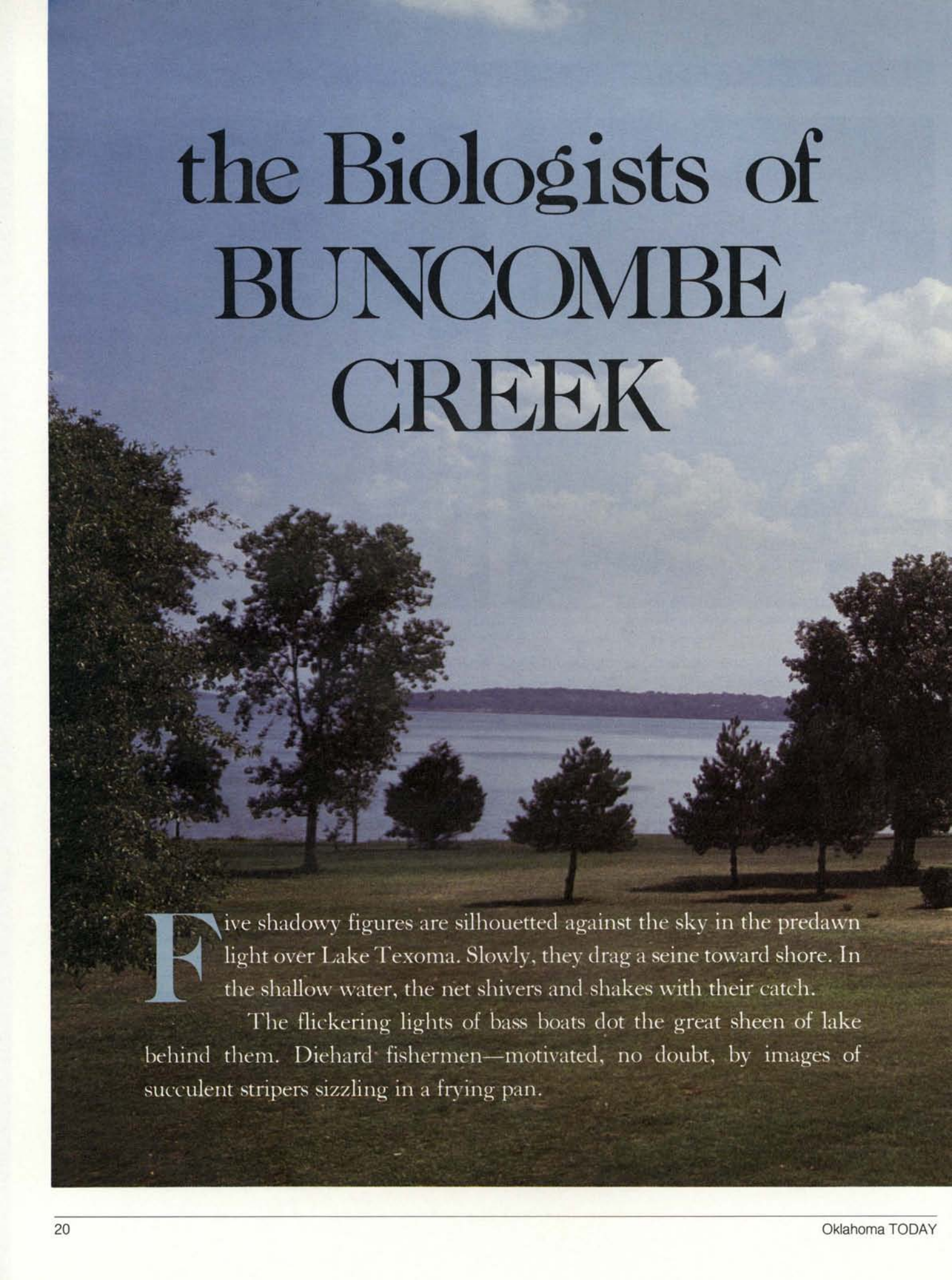


The Friends of Nardin will continue their tradition of big-time small-town reunions with the 8th Annual Nardin Heritage Celebration, Friday and Saturday, May 24 and 25, 1985.

The event will come complete with parade, antique cars and farm machinery, tours of The Heritage House, music, home-baked pies, arts and crafts—and an old-fashioned wheat threshing demonstration.

For more information on the Friends and their celebration, contact Lawrence Crow, 1107 N. Terrace, Wichita, KS 67208; (316) 686-0268.

Both Kathryn and Steve are regular contributors to Oklahoma TODAY—and both live in Norman.



the Biologists of BUNCOMBE CREEK

Five shadowy figures are silhouetted against the sky in the predawn light over Lake Texoma. Slowly, they drag a seine toward shore. In the shallow water, the net shivers and shakes with their catch.

The flickering lights of bass boats dot the great sheen of lake behind them. Diehard fishermen—motivated, no doubt, by images of succulent stripers sizzling in a frying pan.



Bill Beckenhauer and his classmates are more interested in studying their catch than eating it. On just this one haul, they count eight species of fish, including a four-foot-long gar writhing among hundreds of tiny *Menidia* (or silversides).

Several miles away, another class is in session, this one crouched in an isolated wood north of the lake. Binoculars in hand, Terri Brandeberry and seven other students try to catch sight of the red-eyed vireo they have been hearing.

Most of the year, Terri and Bill are high-school teachers. But for two months this summer, they've become students again, joining teachers, college students, high-school students and others at the University of Oklahoma's Biological Station.

The Biological Station lies on the north shore of the lake, just east of Willis Bridge and Highway 99. The main building on the 9-acre campus was originally intended as a resort hotel. But the builder went bankrupt, and the building and land were subsequently donated as a biological station. In addition to the erstwhile hotel, which houses a dormitory, dining hall and rec room, there are three apartment buildings, two research buildings, an office, a library, a stockroom and a boathouse. There is also a large classroom building.

But the *real* classroom is the out-of-doors—the lake, and the streams, meadows, woods and sand dunes surrounding it. These are the settings for courses in reservoir fisheries, stream ecology, ornithology, field botany, limnology, herpetology, field ecology. . . . If it swims, slithers, creeps, crawls, flies, glides or grows in Oklahoma, chances are you can study it at the Biological Station.

By 6 in the evening, Terri is through with class. But there's still more work ahead before she can call it a day. Kissing her two young daughters good-bye, she hops on her bike and pedals through campus. Down the road, she passes a pick-up truck piled high with plant

By Linda D. F. Shalaway
Photographs by Victor Rivas

What was planned as a Texoma resort has matured into a lakeside summer school in subjects from field botany to limnology.



A seineful of Lake Texoma gives students a cross-section of the creatures that live in its waters. Catches include tiny Menidia (silversides) and even a four-foot gar. Left to right: Melinda Russell, teaching assistant Scott Cone, Dr. Clark Hubbs, Bill Beckenhauer, Arlene Stapleton and Jim Reeves.

presses. She looks closer and spots several Field Botany students way off in a patch of Indian paintbrush. With hand lenses, they are examining the brilliant red foliage. The splotches of calamine lotion on their legs reveal the main hazard of their work.

Terri's destination is a small pond several miles away. That's where she is doing her own research on male dragonflies and the territories they establish.

"I got the idea in Field Ecology class, when we watched mating behavior in dragonflies," Terri explains. She is studying how the dragonflies respond to changes in the pond. For example, she has noticed that by throwing a log in the water, she can attract more dragonflies to the pond.

Pedaling back to her apartment again, Terri stops at the lizard pens to chat with another classmate, who is studying lizard behavior. The large, square "pens" of galvanized sheet metal are a popular attraction on campus. The resident reptiles and amphibians are marked with bright

patches of paint so that students can distinguish the individual animals they are studying.

"This is all so new and fascinating to me," says Terri, whose educational background is history. She is taking the summer classes toward science certification and a degree in science.

Bill, on the other hand, is a biology teacher. This summer at the Biological Station—his second—is part of work towards a Master's degree.

"The knowledge and experience I'm gaining here will also improve my teaching," he says. "I'd come back every summer, if I could," he adds wistfully.

Bill and Terri, like most of the students, are taking two courses each. The courses are completed for college credit through the University of Oklahoma. Each class meets for two full days every week. "Spare time" is spent studying, doing library research or working on individual research projects for each class.

Terri's project for Ornithology class is recording the frequency of different bird

songs in different habitats throughout the day. For his Reservoir Fisheries class, Bill is looking at the distribution of black-tailed shiners in a shallow cove. His Field Ecology project is on plant competition for resources such as water and space.

This opportunity for research experience is what draws many of the students.

"The student comes up with an idea, designs an experiment, then gets lots of help and encouragement along the way," Bill explains. The projects are serious scientific studies. Bill is hoping to publish the results of a fish project he did last summer. Students also learn about research through weekly seminars given by faculty members and visiting researchers.

It's an intense eight weeks.

"Students live and breath biology down here," says Dr. Loren G. Hill, station director. "You can go to college for four years and still not know what you want to do. But down here, you find out one way or another if biology is for you. . . . We've trained literally thousands of stu-

dents who have gone on to successful careers in biology."

Since 1953, many different types of students—ranging from 50 to 100 per session—have spent the summer at the Biological Station. And most would agree that the special advantages of this type of experience are well worth the hard work. For example, they get the chance to be outside, learning about living things in their natural habitats.

"Things happen in the field that can't be duplicated in a classroom or lab," Bill Beckenhauer says. "Like the time our Field Ecology class watched a black rat snake eating baby redwing blackbirds right out of the nest."

Admittedly, it's not always a pretty picture. But it's life.

Bill also recalls the time his Reservoir Fisheries class seined a mud hole to see what could live in such an extreme environment.

"I was in mud up to my waist, almost, but surprisingly, we found several species of small fish."

For Terri, learning to identify more than 90 species of birds and many bird songs is one of her most exciting accomplishments this summer. And it's a task that she admits would be much more difficult without 6 a.m. field trips and constant exposure to birds in the wild.

Another distinct advantage of a biological station is the close contact between students and faculty. Everyone lives on campus. Students interact with instructors not only during class, but in the dining hall, on the volleyball court or swimming beach, during the weekend square dances or in games and activities during the big July 4th celebration.

"I've made some pretty good contacts down here," Bill says. "If I ever need help or information, I feel I could just call one of my instructors."

Faculty members, like the students, come from all over the state and country, and they must meet three criteria:

"They must be excellent teachers, have viable research programs and, most importantly, interact well with *all* types of students," Hill stresses. He also emphasizes the low teacher-to-student ratio.



Field ecology classes explore the land around the water. Dr. Howard McCarley instructs (left to right) Becky Rabinovitch, Bruce Stewart, Kevin Dixon, Bill Beckenhauer and Melanie Lohman.

The eight-week summer session is just one component of the Biological Station. The station also functions as a year-round research center and conference center. Federal funding supports three resident researchers. Their studies concentrate on reservoir ecology, taking advantage of the station's lake location, Hill explains. He adds that newly acquired research funds will be used to double the research facilities and add another permanent researcher.

Other research is done by biologists from across the U.S. who work at the Biological Station for short periods of time. Last summer, for example, the station hosted a North Carolina biologist studying the development of song in brown-headed cowbirds, a New York entomologist who studies ecology and reproduction of wasps that live on sand dunes and a California ichthyologist who studies stream fishes. Educational conferences are held there as well; all of the

station's facilities are available to groups meeting there.

For most people, Texoma is just a lot of water in a convenient package—a good place to land some striper, exercise a sailboat, lie in the sun like vacationing lizards. The people at the field station seem almost a separate species—learning about the lake and its shoreline, not skimming over its surface. You might almost call them “fishers of fact.”

“It’s a real challenge,” Terri Bran-deberry says. “If you want a laid-back summer, this is not the place to come. But if you are willing to work, you can really accomplish something.”

Linda Shalaway lives in Stilwell. Victor Rivas, an OU graduate, is a free-lance photographer based in Norman.



The University of Oklahoma Biological Station is on the Buncombe Creek arm of Lake Texoma, about 17 miles south of Madill. Its 1985 summer session starts the first week in June, and registration is June 1.

All courses run eight weeks and are open to anyone—pre-college, undergraduates, graduates and teachers. Tuition is the same as for the Norman campus: \$22.60 per semester hour for lower-division undergraduate classes, \$25.90 for upper-division undergraduate classes and \$30.60 for graduate-level classes.

At the station, students live, work, eat and sleep biology. Room and board runs \$195 for eight weeks in the dorm; apartments are \$230 for the same period (meals included). Scholarships of \$400 are available.

To learn more about registration and scholarships, write the University of Oklahoma Biological Station, 730 Van Vleet Oval, Norman, OK 73019, or call (405) 325-5391.

The Bass Fisherman's Friend: Loren Hill

Loren G. Hill. You may not recognize the name. But chances are, you have used his inventions, seen him on television, read about him in fishing magazines or heard him speak at seminars and fishing institutes nationwide.

To the students and faculty of the University of Oklahoma Biological Station, Dr. Hill is their director and a prominent fish biologist. But to millions of anglers across the country, this soft-spoken, darkly tanned man is an avid and skilled fisherman who has invented new lures and methods to help them land bass.

Take, for example, the Snatrix. Ten years ago fishing for bass was drastically altered by Dr. Hill's invention of a plastic lure that looks for all the world like a small water snake.

“I first got the idea for the Snatrix when I caught a four-pound bass with a nine-inch water snake in its mouth,” Hill says. Later, one idle afternoon down by the lake as he watched his son swimming, Dr. Hill scooped up some clay and made a mold of the lure he envisioned. He promptly forgot about the mold, then rediscovered it two days later, baked hard by the sun. He used this mold to cast five plastic “snakes.” When he tested the lures and lost all five to fish, he knew he was on to a good thing.

The lure is now manufactured commercially by Bill Norman Lures, with annual sales of \$8 to \$9 million.

Another Hill invention is the pH method of fishing. In earlier research, Dr. Hill discovered that water pH (acidity or alkalinity) directed the movement of fish. Based on this finding and many years of studying bass, he developed a simple, portable pH meter that can be used by fishermen. The unit, mounted on a boat, is attached by a long cord to a probe that can be dropped into the water to measure pH. An angler who knows what pH bass prefer can predict when



STEVE SISNEY

and where the fish will be.

The pH meter has been tested by the pros, who “can’t believe how accurate it is,” says Dr. Hill. He has been issued two U.S. patents, and more than 60,000 anglers are currently using his invention.

And there’s more to come, Hill promises. An ichthyologist by training, inventor by nature, he continues to put technical knowledge to practical use by developing new aids for fishermen.

Hill’s creative energies have also been applied to the administration of the Biological Station. Under his direction for the past 16 years, the station has become a major education and research center. He has expanded the summer session from the five courses originally taught to nine. And over the years he’s been successful at

angling for funding from the National Science Foundation.

The Biological Station’s research program under his direction operates with federal funding of close to \$1 million. Hill has hired three biologists—fishery ecologist, zooplankton ecologist and phytoplankton ecologist—to study reservoir environment. He hopes to add a fourth researcher soon.

In September 1984, Dr. Hill began his own \$300,000 study of the competitive interactions of black bass and striped bass in Lake Texoma and at Toledo Bend (on the Texas-Louisiana border). The study is funded by the Bass Research Foundation. This year, Dr. Hill is sharing his knowledge and experience with others as a staff member of the American Bass Fishing Institute, which holds seminars in cities all over the country.

Until the fall of 1984, Dr. Hill was also chairman of the University of Oklahoma’s Zoology Department. He resigned from that position to become director of the Biological Station and spend more time on the shores of Lake Texoma.

—Linda Shalaway

SPECIAL VACATION
PULL-OUT

GREAT EXPEDITIONS

S U M M E R '85



Wade into a Water Wonderland: Northeast Oklahoma's Lakes & Streams

Photographs by Fred Marvel

F I S H I N G

By Sam Powell

It all started in northeastern Oklahoma.

I can still recall the hubbub created by the construction of some of the first big lakes, back in the '40s and '50s, when I was a kid growing up in Muskogee. These days, Oklahomans have become so used to seeing and hearing about huge man-made lakes that another new reservoir creates little stir outside its immediate area.

Wasn't always so.

One of my most memorable early fishing trips was the then-awesome expanse of Grand Lake O' the Cherokees. My Dad and some of his fishing buddies let a few kids tag along, primarily just to see the big new lake. The bankside fishing for crappie was excellent that bright spring day, I remember. Old Grand is still a terrific fishing spot, but today it's just one of many big lakes in northeastern Oklahoma that provide excellent fishing, literally year-round.

Grand Lake was the first, though, and it's still the biggest. Impounded back in 1941, the lake stretches some 65 miles from dam to far upper headwaters, has some 1,300 miles of shoreline and 59,200 acres of water.

The prolific, tasty crappie has long been king on Grand, and is still the favorite fish for thousands who frequent the big lake. What makes crappie fishing so popular on Grand, and many other state lakes, is that this species can be readily caught year-round.

Winter, in fact, is a favorite crappie season on Grand, which has more commercial, heated crappie docks than perhaps any other lake in this part of the country. At last count, there were about 25, and fishing is good at these spots all year. In mid-summer, fishing will usually be best at night.

Grand retains its place as one of

Oklahoma's very best black bass lakes, too. Each summer for the past several years, Grand has given up the largest single catch of any of the hundreds of bass tournaments held in Oklahoma each season. And in the summer, bass fishing on Grand means night fishing.

Savvy bass anglers will be on Grand again this season when the full moon is aglow, throwing the reliable plastic worm (usually black or grape colors) and jig and pork chunk around the sharp points and just off main creek channels.

There's a special bonus at Grand this season: The lake has been heavily stocked with the exciting, fighting hybrid bass. These are an artificially produced cross between white bass and striper, and they should weigh in the four-pound range by summer. Look for schools in big, open-water areas in the lower lake, mixed in with Grand's excellent populations of white bass.

Two other elder-statesmen lakes will again be providing more than their share of terrific white bass and crappie action this spring.



Spavinaw Spillway

Lake Tenkiller and Fort Gibson both came on the state fishing scene in 1952. Like all man-made lakes, they've had their ups and downs, but they are still very productive for anglers who know how and when to fish them.

The 14-inch length limit has brought good bass fishing back to the cool, clear waters of Tenkiller after years of problems. Since the lake joined the growing number of state waters where all bass less than 14 inches in length are illegal to keep, the bass are back in strength. Anglers like to work either small crankbaits or plastic worms along steep, rocky bluffs and sharp points, on calm, moonlit nights.

Another tradition on Tenkiller has been night fishing for white bass and crappie. This family-oriented angling really gets going about mid-May, and stays productive through late summer.

Anglers usually take the largest strings in the area from Cookson Bend to the SH 82 bridge. Put out several lantern lights, take plenty of lively minnows and make a night of it. This is fishing anyone can master, and the crappie and sandies seldom fail to cooperate.

Tenkiller continues to boast good populations of channel catfish and lots of big flatheads, too. Drift fishing for catfish remains a popular method of putting good eating fish in the camp skillet. Anglers use cut shad, and just let boats drift over shallow, rocky flats at this season.

Fort Gibson will again be hard to beat for some very good crappie fishing this season.

If you really want to know about a particular lake, talk to a man who both fishes there and also happens to be a fishery biologist—like Jim Smith, who owns a lakeside home at Gibson. Jim, the northeast division fishery manager for the wildlife department, confirms that good crappie action continues on this old lake.

"Crappie go in cycles, generally, and we've had several excellent years of spawning on this lake," Jim says. "I personally verified several crappie weighing three pounds from Gibson last season." Gibson is also an excellent white bass lake, particularly right in the middle of summer. It also has its share of catfish and pretty good bass fishing at times.

Not to be overlooked on the



Spring River

Grand River chain of lakes is the last member of the trio to be impounded. Still called Markham Ferry by some old-timers, Lake Hudson was completed in 1963 and holds 12,000 acres of great bass fishing. The extreme upper end of Hudson is some of the prettiest fishing water in the state, with steep, limestone bluffs that drop off into clear depths.

This is Kentucky bass water. Hudson has an outstanding population of this fish (correctly called "spotted bass"), and they particularly like small, crawfish-colored crank baits, worked along the bluffs and rocks.

Savvy Hudson anglers concentrate on a particular stretch, generally up-lake from Big Cabin Creek, when a good flow of water is coming downstream from nearby Pensacola

Dam at Grand Lake.

Hudson also has good catfish, crappie and white bass fishing, and many giant flatheads are taken here each summer by trotliners.

Two relatively small lakes—Spavinaw and Eucha—lie east of Hudson and south of Jay. They sparkle in the green-mantled Cookson Hills primarily because Tulsa needed water supplies, but they also provide a lot of great fishing. Both, at times, are some of the very best lunker bass water in the state.

Some of the heaviest strings of bass taken in Oklahoma come from the far upper end of Spavinaw on cold, blustery March and April days. Big white and chartreuse spinner-baits and jig/frog are always productive.

One of the oldest lakes in the state (impounded in 1924), Spavinaw holds 1,637 acres of terrific bream fishing. It's fun for the kids, along about early June. You can catch big bluegill here by dunking crickets and minnows among its large weedbeds.

Eucha, (pronounced *Oochee*), completed in 1952, is known as a big bass hole. It has given up as many 10-pound fish, per acre of water, as probably any lake in the state. Most are caught at night, on big plastic worms or jig/eel and jig/chunk. It has good populations of all other popular sport fish.

Eucha is also the site each spring of the big "gigging tournament," where teams of giggers take rough fish from its crystal-clear water. Gigging, done at night under powerful lights, has been a tradition in that Delaware County region for decades.

Oologah, the major lake closest to Tulsa, has its own particular appeal and type of fishing.

There's no in-between when it comes to this lake—you either love it or hate it. Oologah, with its almost perfect north-south axis, can indeed

be rough and dangerous. It still has large expanses of standing timber in the far upper portions, where a lot of the best fishing is found. Bass, crappie and catfish anglers head for such as Salt and Lightning creeks, and the region produces fish year-round.

Some of the heaviest strings of big crappie are taken there each winter. Anglers, believe it or not, night fish there during some of the coldest periods, primarily with minnows under lantern light.

Oologah is also a tremendous catfish and white bass lake. Some of the best catfish action during the

spring spawning period is at mile-long Wiganon Bridge, and rip-rap, which crosses the lake in its mid-section.

Anglers who prefer fishing smaller lakes also have a nice option in this region of Oklahoma. Beautiful little Greenleaf Lake, constructed during World War II, is located just south of Braggs, off SH 10. It has good bass, crappie, catfish and panfish action, generally in early spring and then again in the fall—and state-run cabins to stay in.

This run-down doesn't touch another aspect of fishing the Northeast—the area's rivers and

streams. It will have to suffice to say right now that the angler who knows how to fish the upper Illinois, Spring and Elk rivers, and creeks like the Barron Fork, Flint, Lee's and Sallisaw—and *when* to fish them (primarily early spring and late fall)—will find some memorable outings.

Certainly, many other regions of our big, wide and wonderful U.S. of A. have better fishing—for some particular species. But few other regions have any better all-round freshwater fishing now, for as wide a variety of species, than Oklahoma's "Green Country" of the 1980s.

W A T E R S P O R T S

By Jon Mark

WATER SKIING

At age five, Mark Lee was skiing behind an old fishing boat on Grand Lake. At 17, he placed first in Grand Lake's skiing competition. Now, at 22, he skis for fun and runs a refueling dock for ski boats at Grand Lake during the summer.

"The sport has really grown," says the Oklahoma State University marketing major. "Skiers are out till 7 or 8 every night. It's good for my business, but I like it less crowded as a skier."

Tulsa Gary Breisch offers "Oklahoma's only custom-designed and built water skis and accessories" at Ski Unique, near Mannford on Lake Keystone.

"The number of Oklahomans skiing has probably quadrupled in the last three years," Breisch says. "Manufacturers are more interested than ever in offering advanced equipment to recreational skiers . . . equipment such as skis shaped to handle different weights and skiing speeds, elliptical "trick" skis for 180- and 360-degree spins and nylon ski

boots for safety, performance and comfort—just like in snow skiing."

Breisch's water ski school at Mud Creek on Lake Keystone trains 60 to 80 students each summer. Beginners learn to get up, "intermediates" practice an S-shaped course on double and single skis; advanced students learn basic trick skiing—spinning, skiing barefoot, using a ski jump.

Tulsa auto machinist Pat Kendall is one of Oklahoma's top trick

skiers. He stars in the "On to Oklahoma" television spot now promoting the state nationally.

"On film, I slalom back and forth across the wake, and I spray the camera with my ski," says Kendall. "The cameraman got dripping wet but said the shot was perfect." Kendall learned trick skiing at Rocky Point on Fort Gibson Lake. "We built a jump and a slalom course," he says. "I've jumped 80 feet and flown 60 miles per hour. It's scary, and you never lose your respect for the challenge."

The secluded water of nearby Fourteen Mile Creek invites water skiers to visit Western Hills Guest Ranch at Fort Gibson Lake. In Oklahoma, phone toll free 1-800-522-8565 for reservations. Ski Unique is at 3005 S. 137th West Ave., Sand Springs; phone (918) 245-5040. The Cherokee Ski Shop serves the Grand Lake area; phone (918) 786-2300. Pat Kendall of the "OK Skiers" ski show team is at (918) 437-7142.



Western Hills Lodge

SAILING

Tulsa attorney Gary Younger sails

Lake Keystone on a board. "I've been windsurfing about a year," he says. "I use a fiberglass board about 12 feet long, a mast about 10 feet high and a single nylon sail. You hoist the sail as soon as you mount the board, you pull it in, and the wind carries you along. It takes practice, but it's no harder than learning to ride a bike."

On most summer days, 30 to 40 windsurfers ply Lake Keystone. At Grand Lake, Charley Anderson is cruising in his 24-foot Sparkman-Stevens sloop.

"Just sailing is more important than where you're going," says the retired Tulsa aerospace worker. "With sails set riding along, you get this peaceful feeling."

Anderson belongs to the Grand Lake Sailing Club with 100 members and boats up to 38 feet long. "On hot summer days when winds are slack, we party as much as we sail," he says. "On July 4th, we roast a pig and watch the fireworks put up by the Grand Lake Yacht Squadron. I've never seen anything prettier than those lights on the water and our boats."

Tulsa investment adviser Wendell Belden, 44, is past commodore of the Grand Lake Yacht Squadron with about 70 members, many whom race specially designed craft. What kind of fellow races?

"A bored cruiser," smiles Belden. "Wives don't like to race at first because skipper-husbands tend to yell a lot. But now my wife steers and my kids take sails up and down. Even the little ones can move from side to side to help balance the boat. I say, 'Prepare to come about!,' and my family knows just what to do."

From 1978 to 1983, Tulsa investor Stan Brander, 54, won many races on Grand Lake in his custom-built Kiwi-24. "As many as 70 boats compete in our Heart Fund Regatta" he says. (June 1 this year.)

"You want your boat in 'the groove'—that combination of speed,



Sequoyah State Park

sails and trim that produces the shortest, fastest course. You're always bone tired after a race, but it's a 'good tired' if you did well."

Sailboards for windsurfing (at \$575-1,295) and windsurfing lessons are available through Think Snow, 2101 E. 69th St., Tulsa; phone (918) 494-5656. Contact Pam or Larry Barkley, P.O. Box 530, Neosho, MO 64850, (417) 451-2808 or 451-6401, for information about the Grand Lake Sailing Club's facilities on the Honey Creek arm of Grand Lake. Wendell Belden, (918) 492-4836 in Tulsa, invites inquiries about the Grand Lake Yacht Squadron; the 4th of July fireworks start at dusk in the Duck Creek harbor, north of Ketchum.

CANOEING

"Last year from May to August, we had 68,000 boats float the Illinois River," says Ed Fite, of Tahlequah. "It's not as quiet around here as it used to be."

Fite, administrator of the state's Scenic Rivers Commission, says northeastern Oklahoma has streams as pretty as the Illinois, but much less visited, such as:

—Flint Creek and Barron Fork Creek, tributaries of the Illinois in Adair and Delaware counties;

—Lee Creek, near Sallisaw in Sequoyah County;

—the Spring River in Ottawa County near the Missouri-Kansas line in far northeast Oklahoma.

"All have unique beauty," says Fite. "You bring a canoe, inner tube or air mattress and just float or fish for small-mouth bass. Our landowners don't usually mind people who don't leave trash behind."

"The Spring is an easy-going river with no major rapids," says Butch Mankins, a canoeing enthusiast and operator of D & B Outfitters of Tulsa. "There's a state-operated recreational area with three access points to the river for people with their own canoes. You see wildlife: deer, turkey, otters and bald eagles in the winter."

"Lee Creek has tighter turns, steeper drops and whiter rapids. You have to watch for trees, rocks and occasional fences across the river."

Contact the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission, Box 292, Tahlequah, OK 74465, (918) 456-3251, for information about Oklahoma canoe trails. Access to the



Illinois River

Spring River is at the Spring River Canoe Trail State Park near Quapaw (off U.S. 66 or SH 137); (918) 674-2649. For information on canoeing equipment and conditions in Oklahoma, contact D & B Outfitters, 4606 E. 11th St. in Tulsa; (918) 834-8622. The Tulsa Canoeing and Camping Club (c/o Tom Chastant, 4242 E. 85th St., Tulsa, OK 74136) invites inquiries from canoeing enthusiasts throughout the state.

SCUBA DIVING

Oklahoma Citian Bev Chadwell, an accomplished underwater photographer, still has the bug after 32 years of diving. "It starts with

feeling curious about what's down there," she says. "What hooks you is the feeling of freedom you have in the water."

Tulsa scuba instructor Randy Piper adds data on Oklahoma diving: "Oklahoma has more inland shoreline than any other state, with the best diving at Lake Tenkiller, about an hour and a half from Tulsa. Visibility is as much as 15 feet. Grand Lake has visibility up to 10 feet in coves with sandy bottoms."

"Tenkiller is full of surprises like mussels and freshwater jellyfish," Chadwell says. "Perch and sand bass will take bread from your hand. But it's surprising how much trash is down there. Those aluminum cans may last 10,000 years."

Every June, Chadwell and fellow members of the non-profit Atlantean Society have a "trash and treasure" dive at Tenkiller. Fifty two-man teams police the bottom of the lake. Chadwell doesn't know how many hundreds of pounds of bottles, cans and paper waste are recovered, but "there's always plenty left for next year," she says.

Piper has found old horseshoes, square nails, rings, coins, engine props and fishing tackle in Oklahoma lakes. "Some of them covered up old towns, and building foundations can still be seen," he says. "At Gene's Aqua Park at Gore on Lake Tenkiller, there's a 40-passenger bus sunk on purpose to attract divers. It's fun to see people react to the unexpected."

Piper expects a 400-percent increase in diving in 1985 "because equipment advances have made it more fun, professional instruction is more widely available, and because the public has increased confidence in the safety of the sport."

Modern equipment and Professional Association of Diving Instructor-approved training is available in Tulsa at Poseiden Adventures, 3402 S. Peoria, (918) 749-3483, and at Head Scuba, 4405 S. Sheridan, (918) 664-9614. Consider Lake Tenkiller State Park (seven miles northeast of Gore on SH 100), with complete camping and RV facilities, boat rentals and launching ramps, as your headquarters for an underwater adventure.

A LANDLOCKED TOUR of

GRAND LAKE

By Kate Jones

Just off Interstate 44 at Afton, you enter a serpentine world of water and what's grown up around it. There's no doubt lake water's the dominant element; still, it's possible

to wander Grand Lake's shores without ever wetting your feet and still find plenty to occupy your time.

Right next to the Afton exit (and touted by billboards for miles around) is the Buffalo Ranch, one of the last of the old breed of roadside

attractions. The ranch offers close looks at buffalo, highland cattle and assorted ducks and cats. There's also a Western-wear store, a curio shop and a barbecue stand. Summer hours: 6:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. (918) 257-4544.

Head east into high-dollar country, to Monkey Island, home of fabled Shangri-La Resort, luxury condominiums—and the Bear Island Gallery, for its Gala Spring Opening June 15, featuring eight master artists from the Five Civilized Tribes. (Other shows run throughout the summer.) Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Mondays.

From Monkey Island you can head north on SH 125 to the Sailboat Bridge and cross the lake to Grove, or back to SH 85 and circle the lake. If you choose the circle, you'll pass through Bernice (SH 85A), with Bernice State Park and the Bernice Bridge, a favorite fishing spot winter or summer. Then you'll head through the Cleora area and Duck Creek (site of the Heart Fund Regatta, June 1)—and on into Ketchum. (The shores near Ketchum hold everything from fishing cabins to Port Carlos, a complete marina and area dealer for Chris Craft boats.) If you're hungry, Ketchum offers Pete's Kountry Kitchen, locally famous for hot rolls and pies, and the Oklahoma Smokehouse—sandwich fixings from honey-glazed ham to smoked bologna, and gourmet popcorn. (Pete's opens at 6:30 a.m.; the Smokehouse is open 9 a.m.-9 p.m. weekends, shorter hours weekdays.)

You can also stop by Novelty Island Collectibles on Main Street; its owner, Bob Read, has put together a pamphlet on 25 auctions, antiques dealers and flea markets around the lake. Hours: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, March-October.

Head south on SHs 85, 28 and 82 (you *must* meander around Grand Lake; there's no crow-fly road), and turn the corner at Langley, where it all began back in 1941. Tours of the Pensacola Dam (longest multiple-arch dam in the world) start at the Grand River Dam Authority office, two blocks off SH 82, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.; they take

about 30 minutes. If you're around for the 4th of July, Langley hosts the three-day Powderhorn Park Bluegrass Music Festival—including the bluegrass banjo and flat-top guitar state championships. For ticket information, call Joe Hutchison, (918) 253-8471. Favorite eating places in Langley: The Lakeview Supper Club for steaks, chicken and catfish and Dick's Grill (more homemade pies and rolls).

Across the dam lies Disney, which no doubt could win the title of Boutique and Crafts Queen of Grand Lake. To prove the point, Barbara Stewart, who runs Grand Junction, a Main Street shop filled with country crafts, compiled a brochure on "Country Shopping" on South Grand Lake—Disney, Langley, Ketchum. It includes everything from a source for concrete yard ornaments to a doll shop and museum. (Send a self-addressed envelope to the Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 133, Disney, OK 74340.)

A good time to visit is June 7-8, for the annual Disney Island Festival—arts and crafts, country music, a free fish fry. May 25-27, the Acorn, an elegant gift shop also on Main Street, hosts scissor artist Chuck O'Neal, who demonstrates the delicate art of cutting elaborate

scenes from single sheets of special Japanese paper. The Acorn's number: (918) 435-8080.

If you still haven't eaten, there's the Dairy Snack, at Disney's eastern edge. It features a pork tenderloin sandwich made from a 100-year-old recipe—and a bilingual menu in Cherokee and English. SH 28 will lead you to SH 20, Jay and Grove. For a simple, scenic detour, head south at the Disney power station, just east of town, on the Round Spring Creek Road (follow the sign to the Western Handle Co.). The paved road fords the creek twice, winds through wooded hills—and delivers you safely to SH 20.

The next stop is Jay, southern gateway to Grand. Jay's biggest event is its Huckleberry Festival, July 4-6 this year. Other draws in the area: church services in Cherokee at the Piney Indian Church, southeast of town off SH 20 at Indian Road. Services are at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Sundays, and visitors are welcome. A traditional Cherokee hog fry, the Shotpouch Reunion, is also open to the public. Lunch will be served at around 12:30 August 25; the afternoon is for gospel music and visiting. Call Mike Shotpouch, (918) 253-8830, for more information. (Another scenic drive: SH 127, a 15-mile loop past woods and ranches, connecting SH 20 and



Har-Ber Village

U.S. 59.)

Due north of Jay on U.S. 59 lies Grove, the unanointed capital of Grand Lake. The Grand Lake Association, a solid source for information, has offices north of town on 59. Their hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Also in Grove: Har-Ber Village, some 40 buildings and restored structures stuffed with antiques—and a lakeside chapel. No admission is charged, and the gates are open 9 a.m.-6 p.m., May to October. The village is on Lake Road 1, which leaves U.S. 59 just south of town. Also on that road is Cherokee Grove Golf Club, open to the public every day till dark. (918) 786-9852.

Early-summer events in Grove include the 12th Annual Hunt and Webster Arts and Crafts Show and the 7th Annual Hookrafters Rug Show, May 25-27, and a quilt show, July 4-7, all at the Community Center, 104 W. 3rd. Places to eat in Grove range from the Lakeside Restaurant and Cozy Country—both hooked to motels and both known locally for good food—to Grahams Chili Shack (“chili, hamburgers . . . ice cream . . . spaghetti red”) and the tiny Koffee Kup Kafe.

You can end your tour here, head north on 59, cross the Sailboat Bridge and rejoin I-44 at Afton. If you haven't had enough of Grand, head north on SH 10 to the lake's northern portal, Miami. On the way, take a small detour about eight miles from Grove to the old town of Cayuga. Follow the signs to Iron Horse Resort, then on around the bend. The area now bristles with vacation homes, but Splitlog Church, built in the 1890s by Wyandotte visionary Mathias Splitlog, still stands serenely on its hill—now at the lakeside. Come-as-you-are church services (part of the Vacation Land Ministry) are held in the stone church Sundays at 9 a.m.

Miami is home to one of

Oklahoma's most famous artists, Charles Banks Wilson. His Main Street studio is open to potential patrons by appointment; call (918) 542-4155. Some of his works are also for sale at Suzanne's Gallery on East Steve Owens Boulevard; (918) 542-3808. Also in Miami is the Dobson Museum, open Sunday, Wednesday and Friday, 1-4 p.m. It holds Indian artifacts, antiques and a

display on the mining history of the area. (918) 542-5388. A short drive down U.S. 59 will take you back to the buffalo, Afton and I-44.

For more to do and see around Grand, contact the Grand Lake Association, Rt. 2, Box 95A, Grove, OK 74344, (918) 786-2289; and the Department of Tourism's Traveler Information Center at the Miami exit on I-44, (918) 542-9303.

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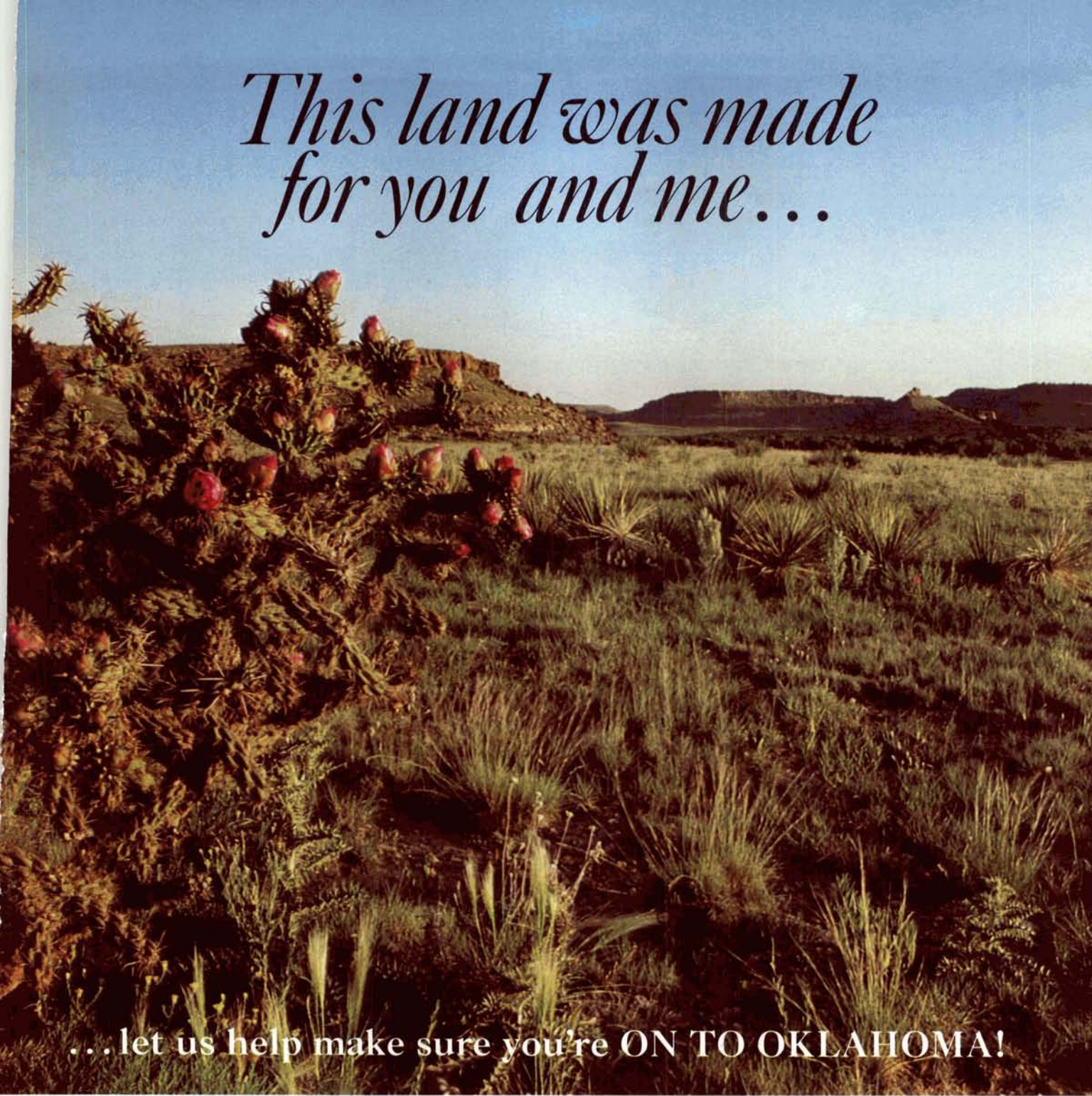
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TAKING OKLAHOMA ON TWO WHEELS

By Casey Morgan and Bob Ritz

Photographs by Howard Robson

"FreeWheel is not a race, it's a ramble. . . . Stop by the side of the road and smell the flowers. Take time to enjoy yourselves."

Kerry Malone
the *Tulsa World's*
FreeWheel Coordinator

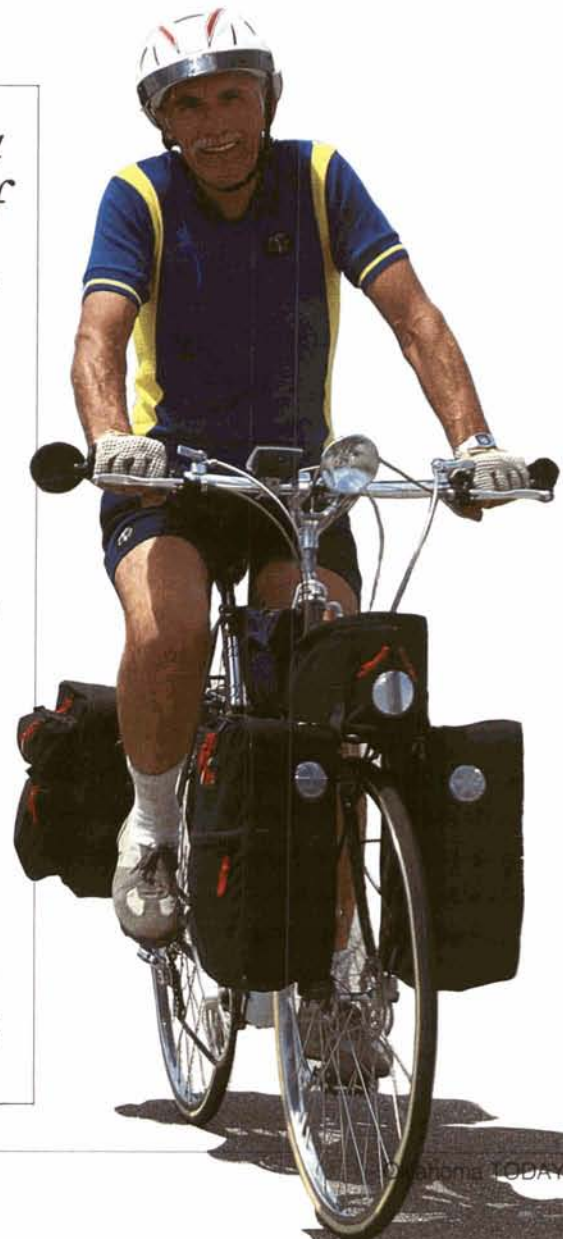
The biggest problem on a ride like this is keeping your seat from getting sore," said a down-to-earth Calvin Griffith.

Griffith, a glass worker from Broken Arrow, was echoing the unspoken sentiments of many cycling and camping enthusiasts who participated in FreeWheel '84.

"The Sixth Annual Family Bicycle Ramble Across Oklahoma" got underway on a warm day early last June. A colorful tent city sprang up that afternoon in Hugo, Oklahoma. Nearly 2,000 people, ranging in age from toddlers to retirees and even including a group of Boy Scouts from Oklahoma City, converged on the campus of Hugo's junior high school.

Most of the riders (and their bicycles and camping equipment) arrived on transportation provided by the organizers, but four hardy souls cycled

FreeWheel veteran Bill Veatch bicycled from Tulsa to Hugo, a trip that took him a total of 36 hours. In all, he'd cover nearly 900 miles on FreeWheel '84.





to Hugo from their hometowns in northeastern Oklahoma. Fifty-seven-year-old Bill Veatch, a FreeWheel veteran, was one of them.

Veatch made the trip from Tulsa to Hugo in only 36 hours, arriving a full day ahead of the rest of the riders. "I'll be taking today's 44-mile excursion to Paris, Texas, and all the other optional loops before cycling home from Coffeyville, Kansas," Veatch said. He would pedal nearly 900 miles before the week was over.

Other riders stayed in Hugo to see the sights, attend the rodeo or just ready themselves for the week ahead. Saturday evening, a briefing was held in the middle of the campground. Riders learned the rules, what to expect on the first day's ride and the consequences of littering anywhere along the route.

"FreeWheel is not a race, it's a ramble," stressed the *Tulsa World's* FreeWheel coordinator, Kerry Malone, "and the first person riding into camp each day will be officially ignored!"

After the briefing, Ling Pham, a 19-year-old student from Tulsa, relaxed on

Quinton: Dinner for 1,500

Small towns are the rule in the tradition of FreeWheel. Each year, cyclists travel to out-of-the-way places where the sudden influx of large numbers of people is bound to have a considerable effect.

Last year, the Pittsburg County town of Quinton, population 1,358, was the smallest of the ride's six overnight stops. For that one night, the population of the quiet community in the foothills of the Kiamichi Mountains more than doubled.

Preparations had been underway since the previous winter, when FreeWheel organizers had asked the Quinton Lion's Club to coordinate their visit.

The Band Boosters and the Athletic Boosters agreed to help the Lions provide meals for the 1,500-plus riders, adopting the project as their annual fundraiser. Members of the 4-H Club and the Boy Scouts spent half a day sprucing up the town. The high school's junior and senior classes operated several concessions.

Lion's Club members also transported FreeWheelers from their campground in the football stadium to shower facilities in the new elementary school.

"We were really sweating out the completion of those showers," said Bill Jordan, the town's principal FreeWheel coordinator. "They were finished with just two days to spare."

Although Quinton is in an area known for cattle ranching, the Lions decided to serve chicken to the riders for their evening meal because of the health regulations for preparing beef. A fish fry had also been considered, but fishermen worried about catching enough fish.

Dinner for 1,500 required 400 chickens and 10 gallons of barbecue sauce. Commercial grills were borrowed from as far away as Chandler and Sulphur. Two hundred pounds of cabbage and 20 pounds of carrots became cole slaw, eight cases of pork and beans were prepared, and six cases of peaches went into a cobbler. To wash it all down, 1,500 cartons of milk were on hand.

"We prepared food for 1,200 people," Jordan said, "but only 530 of them showed up." Fortunately, organizers were able to sell the leftover chicken by going tent to tent later in the evening. Other leftovers were donated to a nursing home and the senior citizens' center.

The local ice-cream parlor sold more than 40 gallons of ice cream, the grocery store did a booming business, and the town's only restaurant stayed open late to feed hungry riders.

By early the next morning, the riders were gone and FreeWheel was just a memory. The FreeWheelers were on their way to Sallisaw, and Quinton was back to normal.

FreeWheelers—nearly 2,000 strong—line up to take off in Hugo, Oklahoma. The official route would run 360 miles, with stops in Clayton, Quinton, Sallisaw, Tahlequah and Vinita. Optional loops upped the miles to some 600 and detoured riders to Paris, Texas; Frogville; Talihina; Strawberry Springs. . .



the steps of the school. Ten-year-old Huy Pham stayed close by his brother's side. This was the fourth FreeWheel for Ling, the second for Huy. When asked if the two hoped to go all the way to the finish, Ling replied, "We only hope to have fun."

Sunday morning, clear skies and a cool breeze made conditions ideal for the first full day of riding. Organizers had marked the route before sunrise, Highway Patrol troopers began overseeing the roads at 7 a.m.—and FreeWheel '84 was underway.

The official route covered 360 miles of scenic Oklahoma and Kansas roads, with daily rides varying from 50 to 70 miles. Optional loops for the more adventurous riders brought the total possible mileage to more than 600 miles.

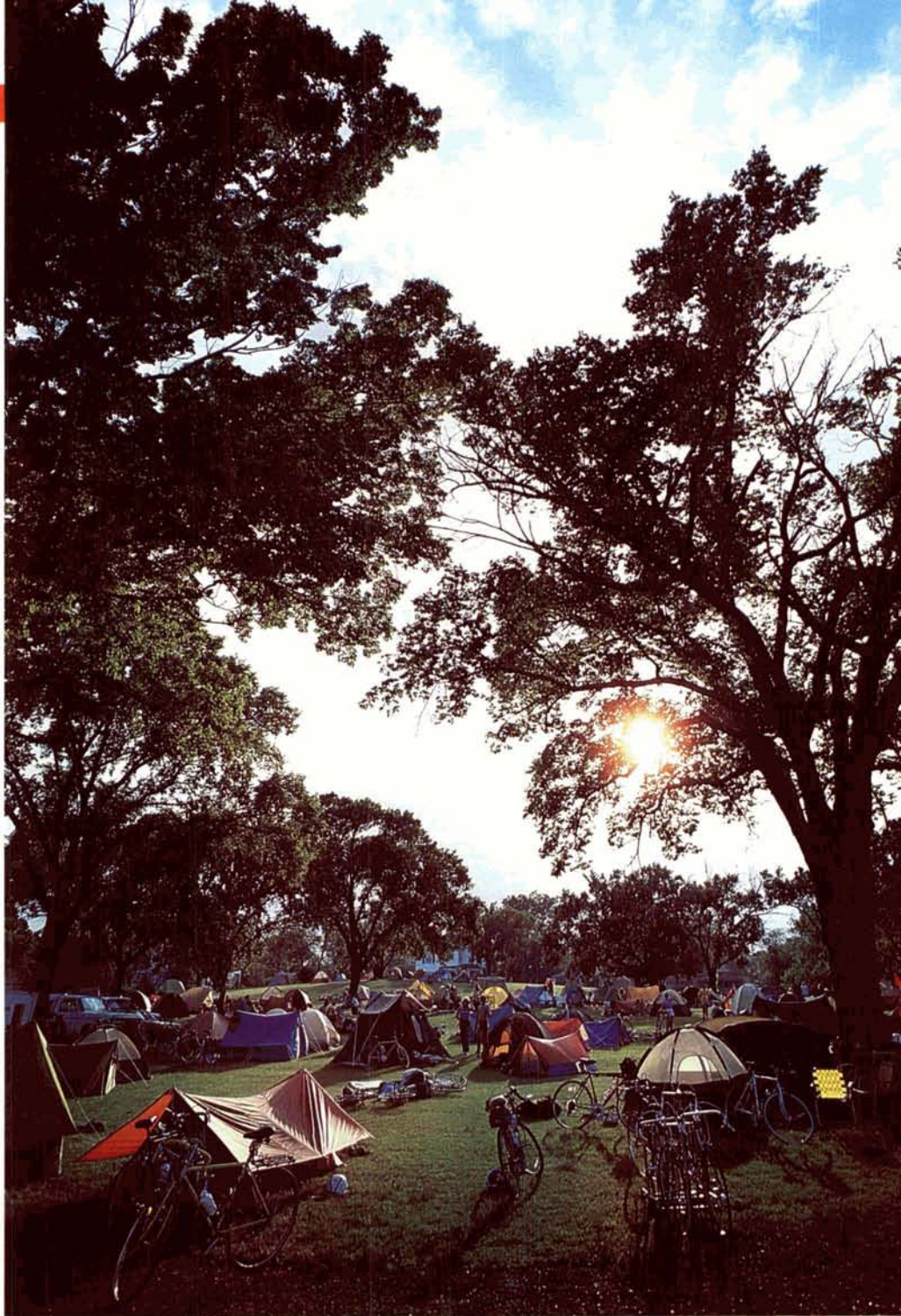
FreeWheel '84 got its nickname, "Summer Snow," from the tiny Pushmataha County town of Snow, which the riders passed through on the first day's ride.

The townspeople there had spent weeks preparing for the day, and by mid-morning, when the first riders rolled in, Snow was ready with a warm welcome. Church-goers attended services on a staggered schedule so there would be enough people to man refreshment stands set up for the riders. As in other towns along the route, the profits would be used for worthwhile community projects.

Arlie Snow, a Tulsa bicycle mechanic and FreeWheel regular, even had a snowcone machine transported to the town. "It's the least I could do since they named this ride after me," he joked.

By late afternoon, all the riders had reached Clayton, the first of six overnight stops on the seven-day trip. It was an unseasonably cold night, and FreeWheelers camping in the rodeo grounds wished they had brought blankets.

The next day's ride of 51 miles, with a 29-mile optional loop to Talihina, offered riders a chance to stop at Robber's Cave State Park before arriving in Quinton Monday evening.



The final stop before FreeWheel '84 pedaled off the Oklahoma map was Vinita, where riders rested after traveling 68 miles from Tahlequah and passing three lakes—Hudson, Spavinaw and Grand.

The Bob Williams family was enjoying its third FreeWheel. Jo Carroll Williams, a kindergarten teacher in Jenks, rode with her husband, an engineering assistant in Tulsa. Their son, Jeff, a 16-year-old student in Jenks, made Tuesday's 65-mile ride to Sallisaw with a foreign exchange student from Germany.

"I give my parents a hard time, but they really are pretty strong riders," Jeff admitted.

FreeWheel's traditional downpour came in Sallisaw while the riders slept. The rain stopped at daybreak on Wednesday, in time for the riders to have breakfast and prepare for a cool day's ride to Tahlequah. Jeff and his

They Also Serve Who Only Drive and Wait

Not everyone involved in FreeWheel rides a bicycle. Dismounted members of the ride's support crew keep everyone else's wheels turning.

For FreeWheel '84, MK&O Bus Lines transported the participants to Hugo and back home from Coffeyville for a special low fare. One of the buses stayed with the riders for the entire week, providing much-needed mobile restroom facilities. It also served as a "sag wagon" for riders unable to complete a day's ride due to illness or mechanical failure.

A truck donated by Facet Industries of Tulsa transported the riders' bicycles and camping equipment to Hugo and back home from Coffeyville, and also carried the camp-

ing equipment from town to town. A contingent from the Tulsa Job Corps helped with the daily loading and unloading.

Quiet time in the FreeWheel campgrounds started at dark each night. While it was the end of the day for the riders, it was just the beginning of work for many of the support personnel. Five bicycle shops, including one from Texas, sent trucks and personnel to accompany the riders. These portable repair shops operated under generator-powered lights until late each night.

Tom Brown, from Venable's Bicycle Shop in Tulsa, said, "The majority of bikes were in pretty good shape to start with, but the roads were unusually rough on them last year."

As a courtesy to FreeWheel riders, the shops charged only for parts, not labor. However, they did sell a variety of merchandise to help defray their expenses.

Lee Parks, an employee of the Downtown YMCA in Tulsa, came along on the ride to offer his services as a masseur. At discount prices, he had plenty of clients.

"It's really gratifying to see some immediate results from my work," Parks said. He also admitted to enjoying the open air.

Unquestionably, FreeWheel is the only vacation where a person can have his luggage loaded and unloaded for him, and get a massage under the stars while his transportation is being fixed for free!

friend were looking forward to seeing a movie or going to a video arcade that night.

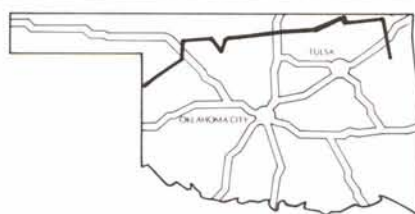
Tahlequah had been popular with riders the previous year, so FreeWheel organizers decided to make the town a two-day stop. Those who left the campground to explore Tahlequah were reminded that FreeWheel had a wholesome family reputation, and anyone making too much whoopee would not be bailed out of trouble.

Jan Kendall, a Tulsa housewife, was too tired to even talk about whoopee. She was supervising four children on the ride, three of her own and one neighbor's child, ranging in age from 11 to 16. They were all looking forward to Thursday morning, when Jan's husband, Bill, would join them in Tahlequah for a day-long float trip down the Illinois River.

"FreeWheel is so popular because it's an affordable vacation for families like us," Jan said.

Friday took the riders through the hilly Spavinaw area on their way to an overnight rest in Vinita. The final ride on Saturday, from Vinita to Coffeyville, Kansas, was mercifully flat and relatively easy.

There was a closing ceremony in Coffeyville before the riders loaded their equipment onto the truck and boarded buses for Tulsa.



Getting There

FreeWheel '85 will go Western June 8, with a route that crosses Oklahoma from high plains (Woodward) to wooded hills (Jay). There will be a warm-up ride from Higgins, Texas, to Woodward on the 8th. June 9 will take riders from Woodward to Alva; June 10 to Helena; June 11 to Tonkawa; June 12 to Pawhuska; June 13 an extra-state jaunt to Coffeyville, Kansas; June 14 to Miami; and June 15 to Jay. The route, with optional loops, covers more than 500 miles and touches five states.

FreeWheel began in 1979 with 250 riders and has gathered momentum each year; in 1984, nearly 2,000 riders took part—representing Oklahoma and at least a dozen other states. Sponsors are the Tulsa World, Tulsa Bicycle Club, the Tulsa Wheelmen, Bartlesville Pedalers and Phillips Petroleum.

Springtime training rides, called "PreWheels," are sponsored by different bicycle clubs. Registration slips for FreeWheel itself are available in the Tulsa World and at bicycle shops across the state. For more information, call the Tulsa World's FreeWheel coordinator, Dennis King, at (918) 581-8385 or the FreeWheel Hotline, (918) 743-9825.

"I'm really glad I came," said Kent Tallakson, part of a group of five riders from Rogers, Arkansas. "I didn't know whether I could get off work until the last minute. I packed so fast I even forgot my soap and toothpaste."

The buses were late in leaving Coffeyville, so friends and relatives waited patiently in Tulsa for the overdue riders. The mother of the Vietnamese boys was a little nervous.

"I worried about them so much. Last year, they called me every day, but this year only twice," she said.

Finally, the buses arrived and the riders were reunited with their families and friends. Tired FreeWheelers exchanged phone numbers and promises to keep in touch until next year's ride. There were handshakes, hugs and even a few tears.

Kent Tallakson looked around the thinning ranks of road-weary but triumphant FreeWheelers, grinned and pronounced a benediction, of sorts, on the whole undertaking: "This is the best kind of vacation you can have. I know it sounds corny, but it's true: FreeWheel is just one big, happy family!"

Tulsans Casey Morgan and Bob Ritz regularly collaborate on free-lance articles. Howard Robson's photograph of the world's largest watermelon appears on the cover of the Guinness Book of World Records.

THE PEANUT

By Joan Biskupic

Sitting by the roadside, on a summer day,
Chatting with my mess-mates, to pass
the time away,
Lying in the shadow, underneath the
trees,
Goodness, how delicious, eating goober
peas.

Ah, the maligned peanut. Those goober-cracking Rebs didn't know how good they had it. Why, in Oklahoma, the peanut sells. And sells big. The peanut is Oklahoma's third largest cash crop, a \$50 million annual industry. Two thousand Oklahoma farmers earn their livelihood from peanuts, growing 255 million pounds every year. Most of these goobers are turned into peanut butter and the likes of Snickers, Baby Ruths and Mr. Goodbars. Still, about a fifth of the crop is roasted and eaten straight out of the shell.

From 40 southern counties—almost half the harvest is grown in Caddo County—the Oklahoma peanut goes all over the world. Sixth in U.S. production, Oklahoma also supports 30 buying points, where peanuts are dried, then graded by federal inspectors; two shelling plants, in Anadarko and Madill; and close to 30 wholesalers and retailers of the peanut, peanut oil, peanut butter and peanut brittle.

In Lawton, at the Museum of the Great Plains, sits a rare reminder of the state's early peanut industry, a 2,900-pound Keystone threshing machine. The horse-drawn wooden thresher—this one from Atoka County—was replaced in the mid-1900s by the combine. Another tribute, of sorts, to the Oklahoma peanut is what is known as "The World's Largest Peanut," on the Durant City Hall grounds in Bryan County. The 2-foot-by-1-foot aluminum goober pea and the monument it rests on were dedicated 10 years ago to the county's peanut growers and processors.

Evelyn Badger, who has been purchasing clerk at the City Hall for 17 years and is the informal spokeswoman for the tourist-attracting peanut, says, "It

seems kind of silly to me."

Public relations has always been a problem for peanuts, real or otherwise, according to Bill Flanagan. He should know. As spokesman for the Oklahoma Peanut Commission in Madill, he has been touting the peanut for 18 years. He has brochures, cookbooks and even children's books, all in praise of the peanut. And he regularly criss-crosses the state to fairs and agricultural shows to spread the word.

Among other things, Flanagan says more than 1 billion pounds of peanuts will be eaten this year in one form or another. About 20 percent of the U.S. crop is grown in Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico.

Oklahoma farmers, who grow predominantly the runner (mid-size kernels) and Spanish type, begin their crops mid-May through early July, Flanagan says. You can spot a field of peanuts by the yellow flowers that accompany the knee-high leafy plants. When the flowers lose their petals, the base of the flower, or peg, grows away from the plant on a vine. The peg drops to the ground and burrows beneath the dirt where it matures into a peanut. The growing cycle takes about 150 days.

It was Spanish explorers who first discovered the peanut, growing in South America and as far north as Mexico. The Conquistadors brought the peanut back to Spain and traded them with Africans for spices and elephant tusks. And it was with African slaves that the peanut returned to North America. From Africans also came the nickname "goobers."

The peanut likely came to Oklahoma's Indian Territory in the first half of the 19th century with the Cherokees who were driven from their

Georgia and Carolina homes. It was also in the mid-1800s that the goober's image began to improve. During the Civil War, vendors roasted and sold peanuts on street corners. And it wasn't only the Georgia Militia that thought "goodness, how delicious, eating goober peas." Both North and South used the inexpensive legume to sustain the troops. (Flanagan tells us that a handful of peanuts contain more protein than the same weight of steak or ham.)

At the turn of the century, with cotton at the mercy of the boll weevil, George Washington Carver developed more than 300 uses for the peanut and urged southern farmers to substitute the legume for cotton crops. By that time factories had opened in the Southeast to clean, grade and polish peanuts.

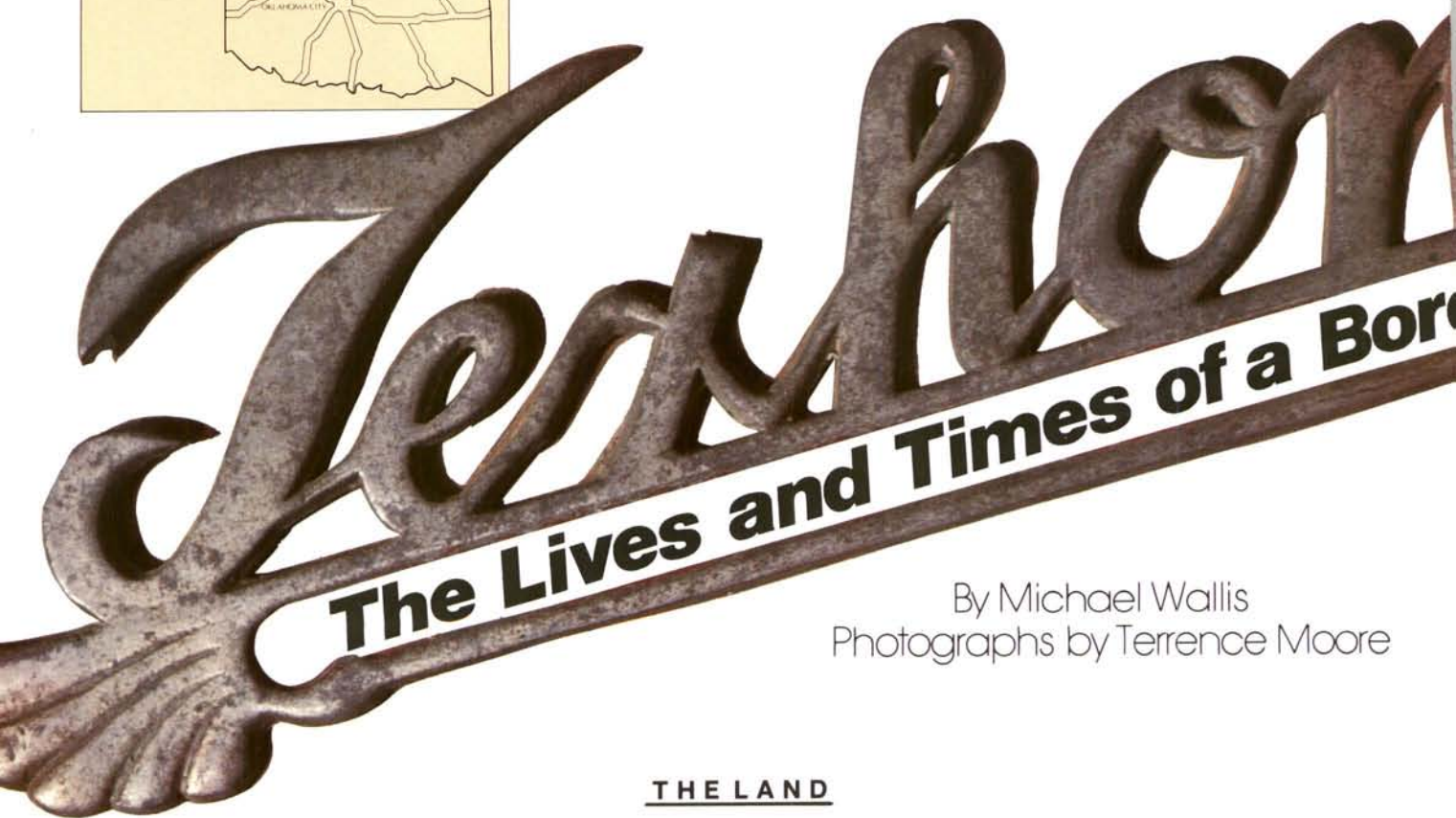
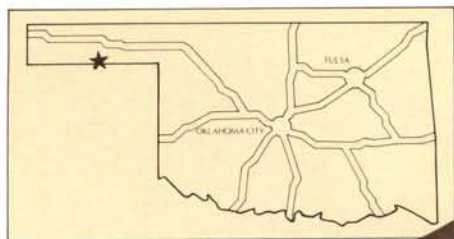
As America grew up, so did the peanut. Today's peanut consumption is double what it was even 30 years ago, nine pounds per capita annually. Half of all the peanuts eaten in the United States are eaten as peanut butter.

"The surprising thing is that we're the only major country that eats peanut butter like this," Flanagan says. "Europeans have not acquired a taste for it."

The Sooner State's official spokesman for the peanut would like Americans, especially Oklahomans, to develop their tastes for peanuts beyond butter and the ball-park variety, though he admits most people stubbornly refuse to take the peanut seriously as main-dish material. He has recipes for peanut egg rolls, quail with peanut dressing, peanut gingerbread and peanut tomato soup.

"As I tell people who come by my booth at the Oklahoma State Fair, don't knock it till you've tried it." 

Joan Biskupic is a writer for the Daily Oklahoman in Oklahoma City.

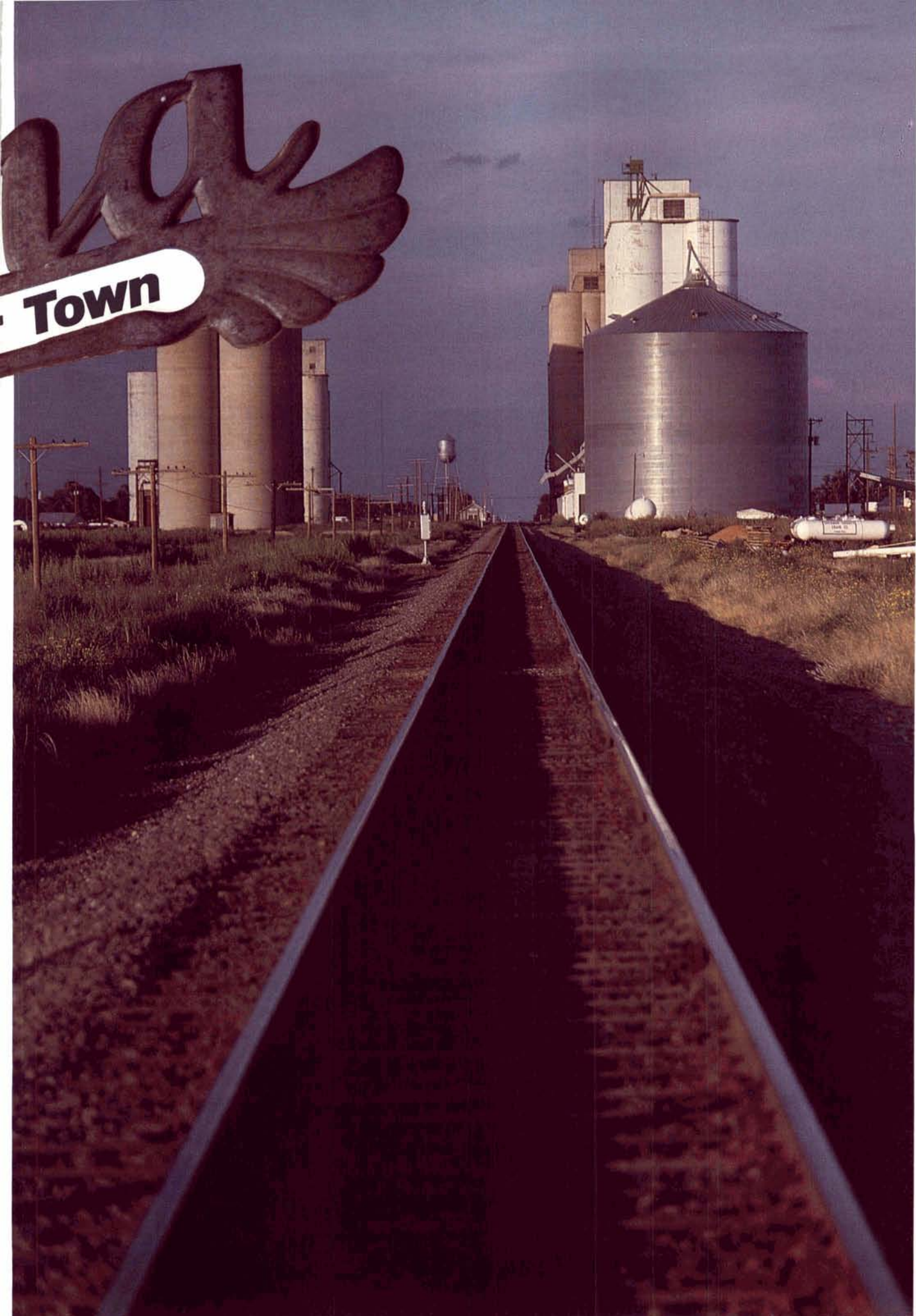


By Michael Wallis
Photographs by Terrence Moore

THE LAND

It's a fresh day—a Panhandle Sabbath. Out on U.S. 54 next to the old Rock Island tracks, a visitor digs a coyote fang from the dirt with a rusty railroad spike. Mindful that the coyote was once called “God’s dog” by the Indians, the man rubs the tooth shiny clean on his blue jeans and slips it into a pocket. It will serve as a lucky charm during his stay in this land and will help fend off the ghosts of the desperados and warriors who still lurk here.

As he walks along the tracks picking up more discarded rail spikes for friends back home, the stranger notices the rising sun has melted like a slab of butter over the endless fields. A warm breeze stirs the grasses and tousles the man’s hair. Cameras click and he turns in time to see his companions—a man and a woman who earn their living as photographers—carefully record the sun’s movement. He watches them aim and focus and at that moment he realizes that they are all outlanders visiting this place that will always be a long



way from anywhere.

Moments later the trio returns to the car and the highway where truckers and tourists are making time. The three visitors head southwest toward the Texas line. A thermos of coffee is passed, and they tie "cowboy air conditioners"—bandannas soaked in water from the ice chest—around their necks. A blend of lukewarm air and homemade tape music, featuring the best cowboy crooners, pours from the vents and speakers on the dashboard.

Soon the lyrics of the songs mix with dreams and images in the stranger's mind. He recalls schoolboy yarns about buffalo hunters and Indian scouts and tales of sod busters and trail bosses and other gypsy-footed souls who traveled the High Plains to forget their past. Then the stranger remembers a verse from a pioneer poem he read long ago.

*Pickin' up bones to keep from starving,
Pickin' up chips to keep from freezing,
Pickin' up courage to keep from leaving,
Way out West in No Man's Land.*

The stranger chants the words over and over to himself for the rest of the morning while the car tracks the sun and heads for twilight shade.

* * *

Most of the day before had been spent just getting this far. The outlanders followed U.S. 270 and turned westward at Fort Supply where the highway gently bends, then flattens out in a straight shot across this land that time forgot. It was a drive requiring several sacks of ice, lots of cold drinks and ice cream bars, and plenty of Haggard and Hank Williams.

The outlanders had read their history books and listened to many of the stories. They decided to come to No Man's Land and look for themselves. They sped across Beaver County, through the towns of Slapout and Elmwood, crossed into Texas County and stopped in Guymon ("Home of the Most Lied About Weather in the U.S.") long enough to get gasoline and directions from a crusty cowpoke with a complexion like a baseball glove.

They took the southwest cut—U.S. 54—and didn't stop again until they came to the spot along the train tracks where the stranger found the lucky coyote tooth and the photographers found rich sunlight filtering through mashed-potato clouds in a sky the color of blue amber.

Now, at last, they've come to the town they heard so much about. A sign planted on the highway shoulder states the name. Texhoma. That's all. No population, no elevation listed. Just Texhoma. A name created from the town's unusual location—nestled between two states.

It's a classic border town with citizens living and working in both Texas and Oklahoma in a state of happy limbo.

The outlanders reconnoiter both sides of the border. They drive past the empty store fronts and those stores still in business, they look at the stucco homes, the churches, the corrals and sheds, the schools and the graveyard. It takes 10 minutes. Then they head for the Golden Spur Motel. There is no clerk to greet them, only a guest book, an alarm clock and a note that tells them to sign their names, pick out an empty room and get a good night's sleep. They oblige.

Just before he drifts off, tucked beneath cool sheets, the stranger glances at the table next to his bed and spies the coyote tooth mixed with a pile of pocket change. Over the hum of the air conditioner, there is the sound of trucks shifting gears at the highway crossroads as they head into the night towards the outside world.

THE TOWN

At 5 a.m. it's still pitch black, and the sky is loaded with stars. The stranger leaves his sleeping companions and goes to the café at the junction of U.S. 54 and Oklahoma 95. A half dozen pickup trucks are parked outside. Inside, all forks stop in mid-bite, and every eye stays on the stranger until he finds a stool at the counter. Only after he is served a glass of water and a steaming mug of coffee does conversation resume.

Most of the talk is about the wheat harvest, cattle prices and the milo crop. Weather is a constant topic of conversation. In these parts, weather has a nasty habit of turning on those who talk about it. There is either too much wind, dust or drought. There is always plenty of uncertainty.

Just by listening to the locals over breakfast, it's apparent that the distinctive character of Texhoma comes not only from the extremes in weather but from the town's location.

"It's always been sorta crazy around here beings we're where two states come together," explains a hired hand who works in Texas and lives in Oklahoma, but who is planning to move to the Texas side and get an Oklahoma job. "I kinda like it here. It makes us different. We're not Oklahomans or Texans. We're all our own—we're Texhomans."

This spirit of duality has existed in Texhoma ever since the town was created. That was right after the turn of the century. March 18, 1902, to be exact, after the Rock Island completed its main line across the Panhandle. Before that, the closest thing to a town was a post office station named Loretta that served cowboys and a few hardy settlers who made the long trek to No Man's Land and set up housekeeping in dugouts on the



William Owen "Slat" Crismon

"Got the name 'Slat' in high school in 1918. I was only 29 around the waist and skinny as a switch. The name stuck. If you write me a letter today and put 'Slat, Texhoma, Oklahoma' on the envelope, I'll get it."

prairie, on one of the last frontiers in America.

In less than a year after the founding of Texhoma, more and more families arrived and picked out home sites on both sides of what ended up the Texas-Oklahoma border. The following year the town was platted, streets and alleys laid out and school land was designated. By 1906, Texhoma was supporting a church, a bank and even had telephone service. A year later there were three banks.

Although most of the 1,200 or so residents in Texhoma today choose the Oklahoma side to live, there is an attempt to keep life balanced in this town with a split personality. For instance, the grain elevators—the dominant architecture for miles around—tower over the border with huge doors available to farmers from both states. Texhoma also maintains two distinct sets of municipal officials, and before the state line was shifted 473 feet south in 1934, the boundary actually went

through the train depot. This meant passengers purchasing tickets stood in Texas and handed their money to an agent standing in Oklahoma. The same held true for the old post office, and there are still a few Texhomans who live in residences that are situated in both states. "They live in the best of both worlds" is how one town sage puts it.

When it comes to the schools, it finally took special acts of the Oklahoma and Texas legislatures in 1975 to combine the districts from both sides of the border. Today there are separate school boards to administer each side. All the children come to the Texas side for kindergarten, then to the Oklahoma side for first through fourth grades, go back to Texas for fifth through eighth grades and, finally, return once more to Oklahoma for ninth through twelfth grades.

By the time the sun is up, the stranger has received his own Texhoma education and managed to meet a

sizable portion of the town's population without having to leave his stool at the café.

THE PEOPLE

Across the street, the stranger finds his friends are up and about and are busy photographing a large painted sign that tells the passing world that Texhoma has 1,277 nice people and 1 stinker. During the rest of their stay, the outlanders will ask nearly every person they meet to reveal the stinker's name. In response, they get nothing but laughter and the promise that the varmint has fled to parts unknown.

The nice people are easy to find. They're on both sides of the state line. They're the hardcore Texhomans, tempered from generations of Panhandle life. Resilient people with both a keen sense of humor and a real sense of survival. People who can recall the prosperous years but aren't afraid to bring up the lean times. People who talk about hardships without complaining and savor the worthwhile moments from everyday life.

Many are veterans of the Dust Bowl years—the “Dirty Thirties”—when black blizzards rolled over the ranches and farms and down the streets of town. These were years when the skies were darkened for days at a time, and people died of dust pneumonia. Many believed the end of the world had arrived. But some faced the wind and held on.

Sometimes, a few of those Dust Bowl survivors can be found down at Crismon's Drug Store, just a block off Main Street.

The drug store is the domain of William Owen Crismon—better known as Slat. “Got the name ‘Slat’ in high school back in 1918. I was only 29 around the waist and skinny as a switch. The name stuck. If you write me a letter today and put ‘Slat, Texhoma, Oklahoma’ on the envelope, I’ll get it.”

One of nine children, Slat was born in Rogers, Arkansas, in 1901. Four years later his family came to the Panhandle in a covered wagon pulled by a team of mules. Their first home was a 12-by-14 dugout with dirt floors. “I recall in 1907 my father added another room on the back of our dugout, and Mother ripped gunny sacks and sewed them together to make a carpet. We thought we were really living then.”

In 1928, Slat opened his drug store. He paid \$1,200 for the stock and fixtures. In 1933, he married Grace McQuitty from Welsh, Oklahoma. Together they raised four children, ran the drug store and the movie theater and managed to farm four and a half sections of land. “My wife died several years ago, but I keep this old drug store going just so there will be one open in town. Gotta always have a drug store.”

Most days, Slat keeps the lights off to conserve electricity, and during the summer it helps keep the

store cool. He fills a prescription or two, sells shoe polish and chewing gum and sits in the shadows kibitzing with old pals like Bill Hollis, a retired wheat farmer. “The true center of the ‘Dust Bowl’ was really Boise City, up in Cimarron County,” Hollis tells the three outlanders scrunched in one of Slat's booths with their cherry cokes. “Some say that was the worst of it up in those parts, but I’ll tell you it was plenty bad down here.” Hollis lights a Lucky Strike and lets his words sink in.

“Well, it’s sure going to rain today,” says Slat. “Just look at my soda fountain.” Big dollops of moisture are running down the stainless steel. “See that fountain? Every time it sweats that way it’s a sure sign that rain is on its way. My fountain always tells the truth.”

That’s good news to Hollis, who snuffs out his cigarette and the Dust Bowl memories in the ashtray and heads for home.

A few blocks from the drug store, the visitors come across Wynnie Carol Beck, a 47-year-old Texhoma native. In 1979, Wynnie, a farm wife and mother of two married daughters, became the first woman ever elected to the Texhoma City Council.

“Texhoma is a good place to live and raise kids,” says Wynnie, who also does volunteer work for the Chamber of Commerce. “These days we’ve got a decent medical clinic with a hard-working doctor, our schools are in shape on both sides of the line, and everyone seems to be looking out for each other. This is the way it should be.”

One of Wynnie's pet projects is the “Okie Relays,” a May event that features hundreds of runners racing in relay teams from the Kansas state line at Elkhart across the width of the Panhandle to Texhoma. “We’ve been running the relay since 1967. It’s a wild three-state race, and it draws men, women, children, seniors—all types of runners from a five-state region.”

Then, after she’s warmed to the questions, Wynnie reveals a Panhandle-sized portion of spirit and pride when she learns that two of her visitors—the pair of photographers—have decided to get married, and they believe a No Man's Land border town would make a fitting place to tie the knot. Wynnie couldn't agree more. She quickly establishes that they've already taken care of the required blood tests days before in Oklahoma City. Next she offers detailed instructions about getting a marriage license in Guymon and finally she suggests they contact Brother James, a blind Baptist preacher who Wynnie says can provide a Panhandle-style wedding. The couple agrees, and they set sunset for their nuptial date.

While his friends seek the counsel of Brother James and then race to Guymon before the court house closes, the stranger continues his rounds. There are more Texhomans to meet, and now there is a wedding

to prepare for.

He spends time with Hallie Mai Krull and her sister-in-law, Sidna Krull. Driving forces and charter members of the Texhoma Genealogical and Historical Society as well as keepers of the keys to the town's museum, the Krull ladies guard Texhoma's heritage like a pair of zealous U.S. marshals.

"We saw that people were passing on and that when they died the history of this place was leaving with them," says Sidna, 84.

"We just couldn't let that happen," says Hallie Mai, 78.

The stranger considers offering the ladies his lucky coyote tooth for the tiny museum filled with artifacts and vintage clothing, but he remembers he has another day left in No Man's Land. The tooth may come in handy. Instead, he buys an armful of booklets filled with photographs and diaries of Panhandle pioneers.

He takes his leave and catches up with a young man he met over morning coffee. David Stanhope is his name, and his occupation was once as rare in this part of the country as a debutante ball. Stanhope is the law. He became town marshal in 1984 after serving as a Texas County deputy and working as a city policeman in Guymon. He's a big man, and he looks even bigger wearing his cowboy hat, boots, badge and pistol. He explains that most of the problems he deals with concerns the traffic or a teen-ager tangling with a six-pack of beer. There is always the chance that trouble might be imported thanks to the highways that crisscross Texhoma, but fortunately most of those problems just keep heading down the road without stopping.

"My jurisdiction is the Oklahoma side," says Stanhope. "The Texas side of town is really under the jurisdiction of the Sherman County sheriff, but remember, those patrols have to come 20 miles or better, so if things get serious enough I need to be prepared to cross into Texas."

During the afternoon patrol, Stanhope pauses at the Texas Grocery, which, true to its name, is located on the Texas side of town. As he heads for the door, Stanhope glances at the bulletin board covered with notices about employment, auctions, town meetings and baby showers. He goes inside and grabs a cold soda pop from the antique ice box.

"Since we don't have a town newspaper anymore, that bulletin board sure comes in handy for folks," says Les Ellis, who along with his wife, Nanell, owns and operates the store. "We're going to keep everything old fashion in here. We want this place to remain a good ol' country store. They're the best kind."

Stanhope and the stranger part company in front of the café at the livestock yards. The café is packed with working men taking an afternoon break. Every chair



Sidna and Hallie Mai Krull

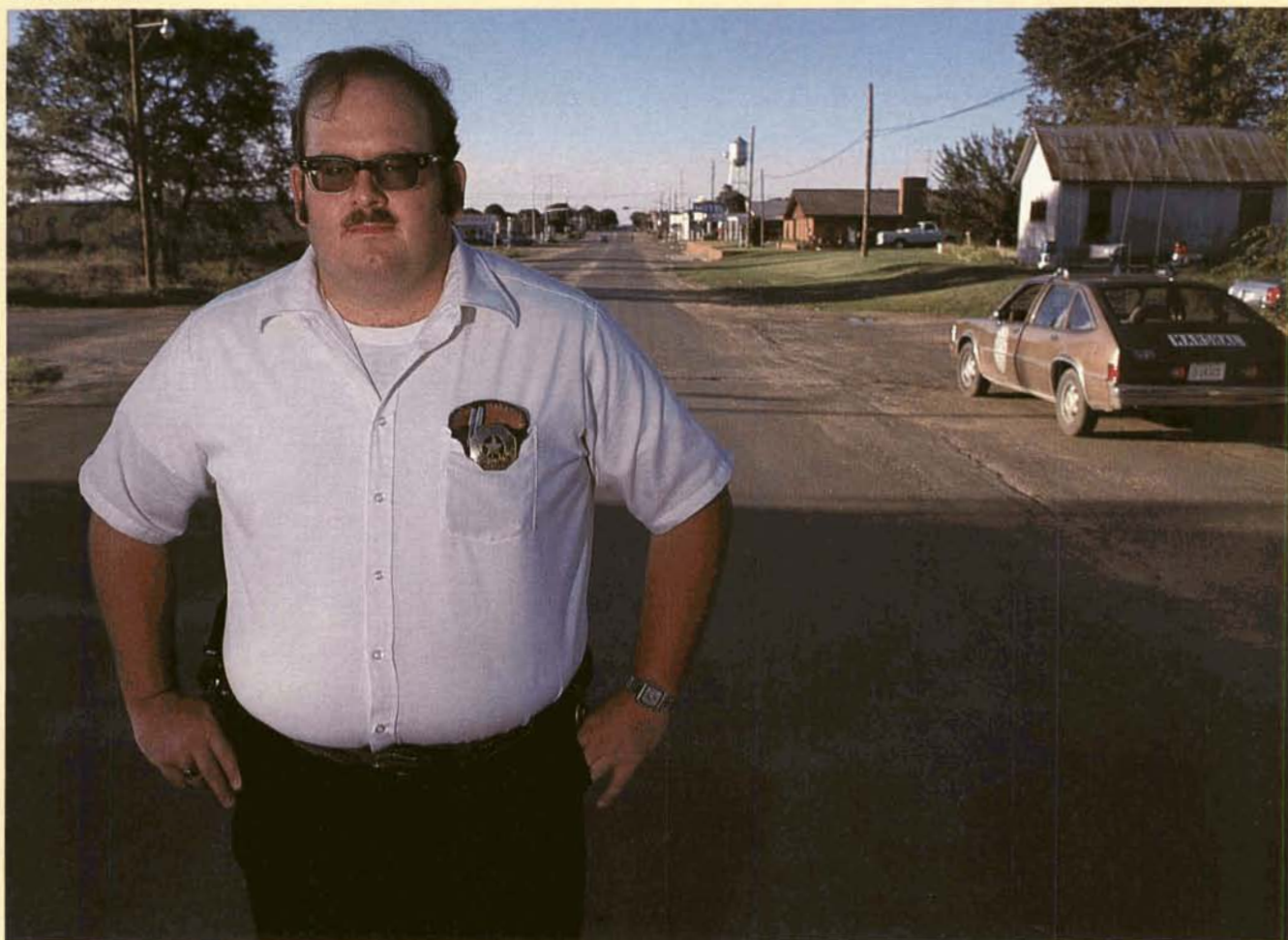
"We saw that people were passing on and that when they died the history of this place was leaving with them," says Sidna, 84.

"We just couldn't let that happen," says Hallie Mai, 78.

and booth appears occupied, and the stranger sees that, besides the waitress, he's the only person not wearing a cowboy hat. He's about to turn and leave when a cowhand gets up and brushes past. In an instant the stranger is whisked to the booth and given a belt of coffee stout enough to raise the dead. When he discovers he's been seated across from Tom Pugh—one of three brothers who became legendary Panhandle cowboys—the stranger gives the coyote tooth a pat of thanks.

"I gave up on school," Pugh tells him. "Quit when I was a boy, and I went to work. I worked cattle. I broke horses, and I spent some time with the railroad, and I worked on a mule ranch, too. I traded livestock, and I did lots of other things. But mostly, I stayed with cattle. I chased them, roped them, branded them. I am a cowboy."

Born near Danville, Arkansas, in 1893, Pugh and his brothers, Bill John and Fred, come from the ranks of



David Stanhope

"My jurisdiction is the Oklahoma side. The Texas side of town is really under the jurisdiction of the Sherman County sheriff, but, remember, those patrols have to come 20 miles or better, so if things get serious enough I need to be prepared to cross into Texas."

a legion of cowboys who helped tame No Man's Land. There will always be cowboys here but none quite like these. Men like the Pughs and the Hamiltons—Rentie, Jean, Charlie and Percy; Nat Young, Ike Record, Bill Crabtree, Ray Dooley, Price Brown, Pablo Trujillo, Max Miller and many more. Their ranks are thinning fast.

Pugh, who clearly recalls shaking hands with Teddy Roosevelt in 1912, depends on a pacemaker—his third—and a lifetime of memories—both bitter and sweet—to get him through.

"It was back years and years ago when God was still a boy that my old buddy and me got some literature from Montana telling about how you could get yourself a section of land. We climbed into a boxcar down in eastern Oklahoma and headed up that way. It was St. Patrick's Day 1913."

There were many distractions along the way,

including plenty of good cattle country. Pugh never made it to Montana. Instead he worked on ranches near Dalhart and Amarillo and finally leased a spread of his own on the Beaver River in No Man's Land. Except for an all-expense-paid trip to France as a World War I doughboy and an expedition to southern California in a stripped-down Model-T Ford, Pugh has stayed put.

"This is good country. Good for cows and cowboys, that is. But a person has to stay with it. You've got to stick it out. I recall during those bad times, when the dusters came, that I could take a 30-30 rifle and shoot in any direction and that bullet would pass over land not fit for anything or anyone. But we knew it would get better. It had to. It did."

Filled up with coffee, the stranger and Pugh stand in the dusty parking lot and finish their discussion of the way things use to be. When the photographers pull up armed with fresh film and a marriage license, Tom

Pugh brightens. He shakes their hands and wishes them well. "This is a hell of a good place to get married and start your life together," he tells them. "Lots of folks have started out here." Tom's wife, Eula, is dead, and he lives alone only a short distance from where the faded yellow stripe is painted across the highway marking the state line. In his backyard are the trees and flower beds his wife loved, and in the garage next to the house is an old saddle, bridle and blankets, and a pair of cowboy boots that Tom Pugh wore when he rode the range.

After they take his official portrait, Pugh offers one more bit of advice: "You take care of each other and stick it out."

On the way back to the Golden Spur, big drops of rain splash on the car. It's a rare summer treat, and it lasts just long enough to wash the air and cool the land. The outlanders look at each other and smile. Slat's sweating soda fountain never lies.

The stranger leaves his companions so they can don their wedding duds—fresh blue jeans and new Western shirts. He returns to the stock yards to pick up a coconut cream pie he had the cook bake for his friends. Then he drives to the edge of town. Mourning doves are starting to settle in the elm trees and lilac bushes that edge the Texhoma cemetery and, nearby, the stranger cuts a double handful of black-eyed susans. Every bride must have her bouquet.

As promised, Brother James is waiting at his church just as the last rays of the sun flicker over the ranch lands. The preacher, blinded years back during a farming accident, wears a Western-cut suit and dark glasses. He carries a silver-headed cane.

The four of them drive out of town on a two-lane blacktop and turn down a dirt ranch road that seems to go on forever. They stop on a rise and take their places.

Crickets are chirping, and there is a red glow on the horizon. As they stand there—not sure if they're in Texas or Oklahoma—and face each other in a tight circle, the outlanders see Venus and a sliver of new moon appear behind Brother James. They describe the scene to him and he tells them he sees it all in his mind.

"Are you thoroughly convinced that she's the right woman?"

"Yes, sir."

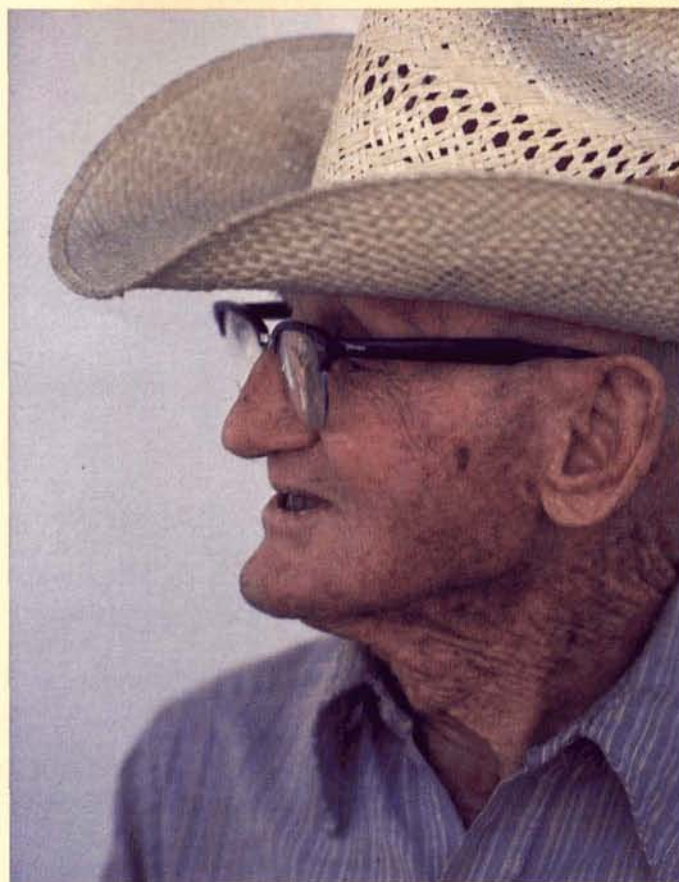
"And, are you thoroughly convinced that he's the right man?"

"I am."

The ceremony is simple and brief. It's Bible verses and common sense—down-home Texhoma.

Afterwards there are kisses all around, and as they drive off, the stranger is certain he hears a pair of God's dogs serenading from the darkness.

They leave Brother James at his home and head for the public telephone in front of the all-night conveni-



Tom Pugh

"I gave up on school. Quit when I was a boy, and I went to work. I worked cattle. I broke horses, and I spent some time with the railroad, and I worked on a mule ranch, too. I traded livestock, and I did lots of other things. But mostly, I stayed with cattle. I chased them, roped them, branded them. I am a cowboy."

ence store to call friends and family. The coconut cream pie is washed down with warm champagne and makes a fine wedding feast.

The next morning on the highway near the state line, in the shadows of the grain elevator, the outlanders stop for gasoline. They look up and see Brother James and his wife. The preacher gives each one a ripe peach and asks them to stop and visit if they pass this way again.

Then they leave. They head north toward the Beaver River where dark clouds are brewing. They eat their peaches in silence and move toward the eye of the storm, way out west in No Man's Land. ❧

Terry Moore, who hails from Tucson, is one half of the Texhoma wedding couple. Michael Wallis claims the coyote tooth he keeps on his desk in Tulsa brings him luck.



A DAY

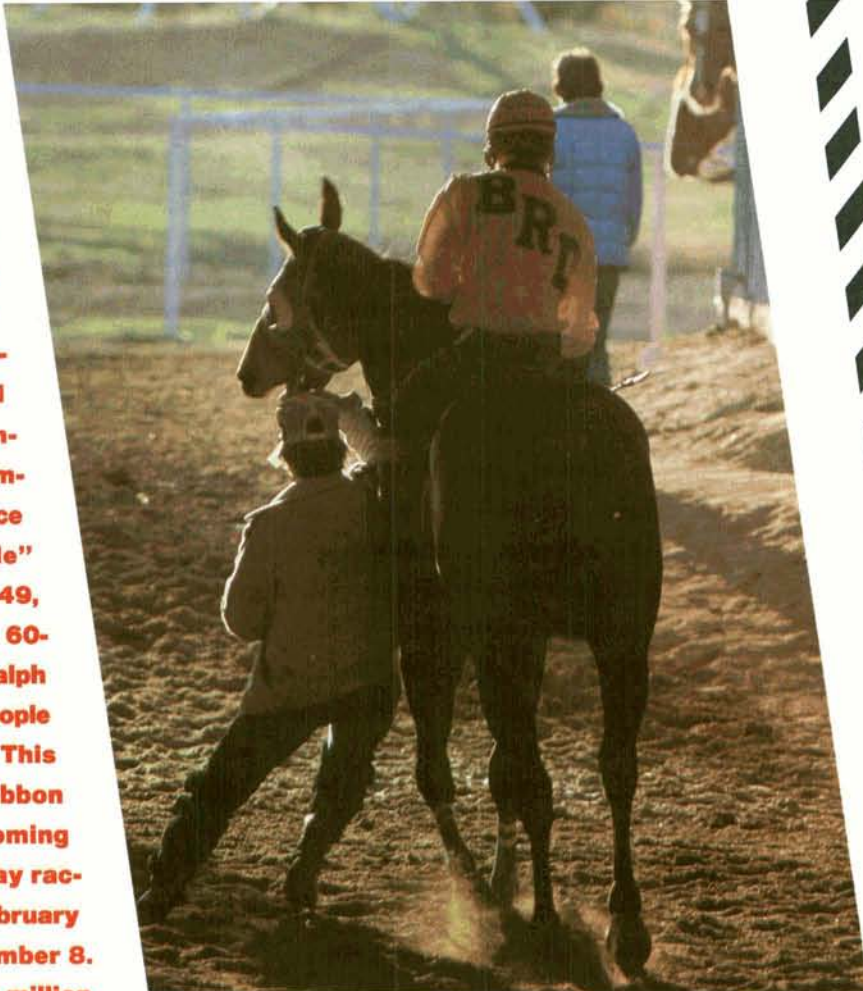
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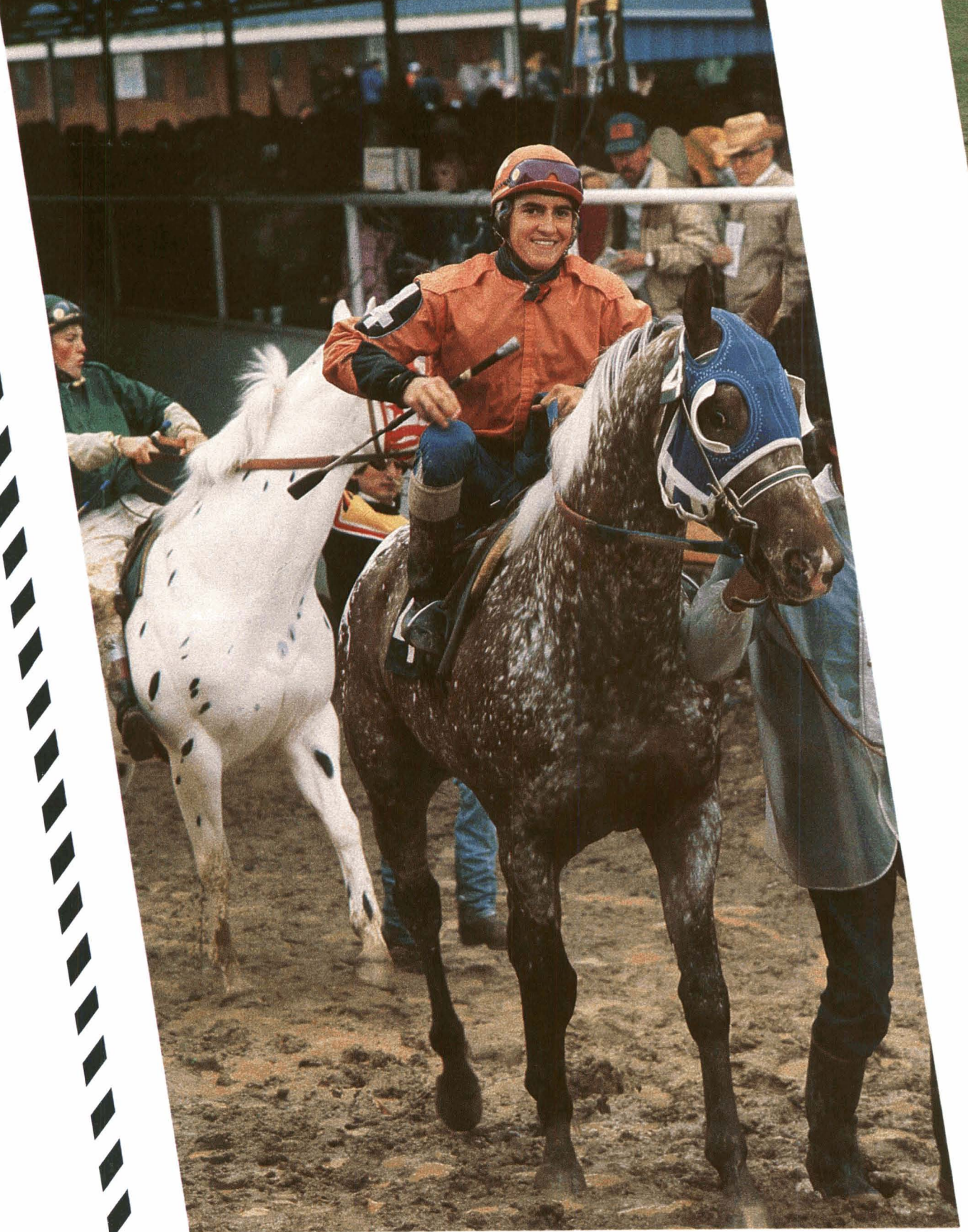
RACES

Photographs by Steve Sisney

They're off and running at Sallisaw's Blue Ribbon Downs — after a slow start last autumn. First the opening day was delayed two weeks, from August 16 to August 30. Then seven weekends of muddy weather marred the premiere season of wagering at Oklahoma's only pari-mutuel track. But at season's end — December 8 — the statistics were still impressive: an average daily attendance of 2,484 and an average "handle" (that's the money bet) of \$261,649, for a total of \$15,698,969 for a 60-day season. That bettered owner Ralph Shebester's predictions of 2,000 people betting a total of \$200,000 a day. This year, the ante's up, and Blue Ribbon is betting on 400,000 people coming through the gates for its 120-day racing schedule, which runs from February 28-July 7 and August 8-December 8. Purse money should total \$8.5 million.

Opposite page: 23-year-old Troy Crissup (the track's top jockey in 1984) rides a Paint, Bang 'Em Up Too, to a win. (Four breeds race at Sallisaw: Quarter Horses, Thoroughbreds, Paints and Appaloosas.) *Below:* Perhaps the grand finale of the racing season, the Black Gold Futurity, named after the Oklahoma horse who won the Kentucky Derby in 1924.



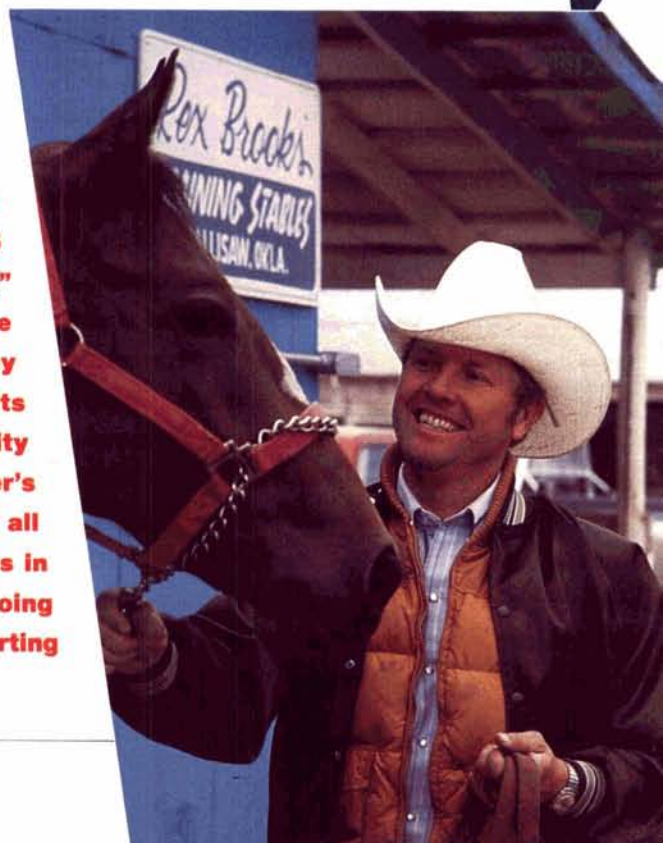


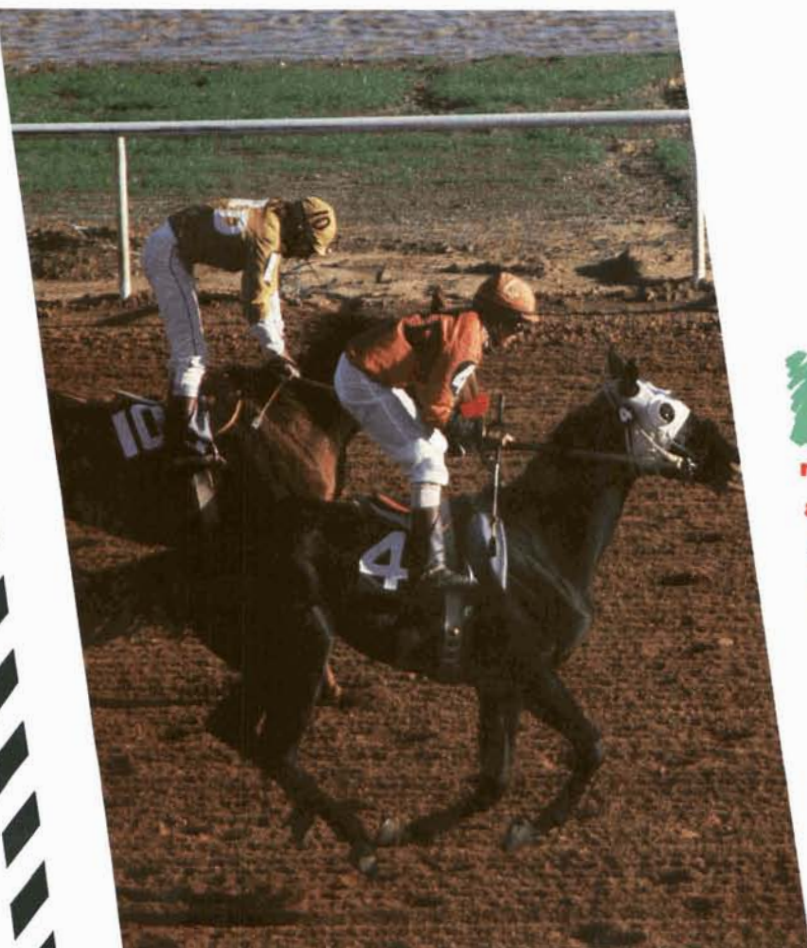
Randy Wilson, the track's second-place jockey in '84, on Zip Silver Bull, and Troy Crissup, on Bull's Bar Charge, head out to race. Two of the nation's richest races for Appaloosas – the Cricket Bars Futurity and the Kansas Futurity – run at Blue Ribbon Downs.



The Quarter Horses Oklahoma's famous for still fill most of the stalls at Blue Ribbon Downs. Out of the gates in 1984: 5,542 Quarter Horses, 1,138 Thoroughbreds, 240 Appaloosas and 184 Paints. Above: Scooper Glass (#10, Lloyd Robinson up) outdistances Birthday Todd, Randy Wilson up.

Rex Brooks, top trainer in 1983 and runner-up in '84, has been at Blue Ribbon Downs since it opened in 1960, starting to work for Bill Hedge, who built the track, and working his way up. Today he and his wife, Sharon, maintain a barn at the track and another at their farm, three miles up the road. Rex, who was born and raised in Sallisaw, is currently training some 75 racehorses. "He used to go to Ruidoso Downs out in New Mexico," Sharon says. "But he quit going a couple of years ago because they had so many purses here worth so much that he could stay right here at home!" The Sallisaw Chamber of Commerce has its own reasons to be satisfied with their hometown track. "City sales tax increased 30 percent, 1984 over 1983," the chamber's Frank Durkee says. "And 1983 was a good year because of all the pre-opening activity!" Durkee adds that real-estate sales in the surrounding countryside are rocketing. "Pole fencing is going up all over the area, and that means horses," he says. "It's starting to look like Kentucky around here!"





Race's end: Thoroughbreds Crow Ka (#4, Dean Wright up) and Pullin' Al, ridden by Randy Wilson. The track runs an average of 12 races each race day, and has space for 4,000 fans in the grandstand seats and another 8,000 standing. New frills include glassed-in ends for the stand, better parking, four shuttle buses....BRD also offers a brochure to explain the United Tote wagering system – including Daily Doubles and Quinellas – and is considering classes for novice bettors right at the track. Write Frank Griffin, Blue Ribbon Downs, P.O. Box 788, Sallisaw, OK 74955 for more information.



Tackle Box Drop • Lake Texoma

Fishermen on Lake Texoma are not an unusual sight, except when they ignore the fish and go fishing for tackle boxes instead. The annual Plano Tackle Box Drop, scheduled for May 19-27, is a different type of fishing event where the tackle box *is* the lure.

The Lake Texoma Association sets 36 tackle boxes afloat a few days before the event begins. Every tackle box contains a letter notifying the lucky finder what he or she has won. Grand prize is \$500, but smaller cash prizes as well as T-shirts, caps, lures, free lodging and other goodies are also given away. The finder gets to keep the tackle box, too.

The prizes are redeemed at the offices of the Lake Texoma Association. In the past, they have had problems with people not knowing about the contest, and picking up a box thinking it had been lost. Sometimes winners got all the way home before looking inside the box and discovering they had won. Now the association puts a self-addressed stamped envelope in the boxes so that the winners can let them know where to send their prizes.

For more information about this unusual event, contact the Lake Texoma Association at (405) 564-2334.

Santa Fe Trail Daze • Boise City

It's time to hit the trail to Boise City for the Santa Fe Trail Daze, May 31-June 1. Residents of Boise City spend a weekend each year celebrating the fact that the romantic and historical Santa Fe Trail once crossed what is now Cimarron County only a few miles west of town.

One of the most popular events of the weekend is a free bus tour of the Black Mesa area on Friday. The guided tour visits dinosaur tracks, the Santa Fe Trail marker, the three-state marker where Oklahoma meets New Mexico and Colorado, unusual rock formations and Autograph Rock, where traders on the Santa Fe Trail left their mark in the form of names or initials along with the date carved into the rock.

The bus leaves Boise City at 8 a.m. from the Christian Church on U.S. 287 North, across from City Park. There will be a stop for lunch at Camp Billy Joe outside of Kenton; the bus returns to Boise City about 4 p.m. The Boise City Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the event,

requires that you make reservations for the tour—last year 500 people showed up, and they cannot accommodate that many without a little warning.

Activities Saturday start off bright and early with a free pancake breakfast at 7 a.m., and go into the night with a dance. In between there will be a 10K race, a parade at 10:30 a.m. downtown and a fiddling contest at 3:30 p.m. in the high-school auditorium. The World Championship Post Hole Digging Contest will also take place on Saturday starting at 2 p.m. Each contestant will be given a set of post hole diggers, and whoever digs the deepest hole in a set amount of time is declared the champ. This event is open to everyone. There will be



separate classes for men, women and children.

The main event for Sunday is the Little Hombre Rodeo, where little people meet up with little livestock for a pint-sized rodeo.

For more information, or to make reservations for the bus tour, call the Boise City Chamber of Commerce at (405) 544-3344.

Wheat Festival • Walters

Oklahoma wheat not only fills our bellies, it feeds our state's economy, too. The Sooner state produces more wheat than any other state except Kansas, and 80 percent is sold to foreign countries. Oklahomans can show their pride in the state's major agricultural product at the third annual National Wheat Harvest Festival, May 11 in Walters, 10 miles south of Lawton.

The festival honors the nation's wheat farmers, and almost 1,500 people show up each year. Most come from the wheat-producing states of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Nebraska and Kansas.

A parade starts off the day's events at 10 a.m. on Main Street in downtown Walters. Then the activities move to Sultan Park, one mile north of town. There will be exhibits of modern farm equipment, and an old-time threshing machine will be in operation. Country and Western and bluegrass bands will play throughout the afternoon, and high-school students will compete for cash prizes in tractor driving and wheat judging contests.

In the evening, the activities move back to town to the high-school auditorium, where young women will compete for the title of "National Wheat Harvest Festival Queen" and a \$1,300 scholarship.

For more information about the festival, contact the Walters Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 244, Walters, OK 73572; (405) 875-3335.

Artillery Hunt • Ft. Sill

Oklahoma has its share of horse shows, but the Artillery Hunt is a horse show of a different color. While most shows in Oklahoma focus almost completely on Western-style riding skills, the Artillery Hunt recognizes a very different type of riding; it's a hunter-jumper show.

The American Horse Association B-rated show takes place June 1-2 in Rucker Park at Ft. Sill. Over 100 contestants and 80 horses are expected to come to Rucker Park, which was built to accommodate the 1936 Olympic equestrian trials, to compete for cash prizes, ribbons and silver. The annual show begins around 8 a.m. and continues to roughly 5 p.m.

For more information, call (405) 353-5512.
By Kim Williams

Next Issue: Meet the Conrads of Bixby, Oklahoma's first family of farm markets. Learn how two state firms conspire to light up the skies on the 4th of July. Travel to an old-time trading post at Lawton's Museum of the Great Plains. Take in "Daughters of the Earth," a showcase of works by eight renowned Indian artists—all Oklahoma-grown women. Savor the earthy wit and downhome wisdom of Alfalfa Bill Murray. All in the July-August issue of *Oklahoma TODAY*.

ENTERTAINMENT

Calendar



ART EXHIBITS

- MAY**
- 1-26 "Sculptor's Drawings 1910-1980, from the Whitney Museum," Philbrook Art Center, Tulsa
 - 1-29 "Featherwork Artistry of David Kline (MA-INGAN)," Southern Plains Indian Museum, Anadarko
 - 1-June 2 "Spiro Mounds," OSU Museum of Natural and Cultural History, Stillwater
 - 4-July 7 Paintings by Howard Terpning, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa
 - 7-June 16 "Bonjour Monsieur Lartigue," photography exhibition, OK Museum of Art, OK
 - 7-June 30 "The Figure in 20th-century American Art," OK Museum of Art, OKC
 - 8-June 30 "Botanical Illustrations II," Omniplex, OKC
 - 11-June 30 Sculpture by Bob Bell, Seminole Nation Museum, Wewoka
 - 12-July 4 "Treasures of the Old West," OK Art Center, OKC
 - 13-Aug. 17 "Spiro Mounds," Historical Society Building, OKC
 - 17-June 29 Photography by Elliott Barnes, Photography Hall of Fame, Omniplex, OKC

- JUNE**
- 1-30 "Comanche Indian Gallery of Art," Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton
 - 1-30 "Folk Art in NW OK," Pioneer Museum and Art Center, Woodward
 - 7-Sept. 9 National Academy of Western Art Exhibition, National Cowboy Hall of Fame, OKC
 - 8-29 Trail of Tears Art Show, Cherokee National Historical Society, Tahlequah
 - 9-30 Summer Sales Exhibition III, Southern Plains Indian Museum, Anadarko
 - 15 Gala Spring Opening, The Bear Gallery, Monkey Island, Grand Lake



DRAMA



- MAY**
- 1-5,8-12,15-18 "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," Cabaret Supper Theatre, Fort Sill
 - 1-25 "Peter Pan," American Theatre Co., Performing Arts Center, Tulsa
 - 3-25 "Morning's at Seven," Gaslight Dinner Theatre, Tulsa
 - 11-12,18-19,25-26 "The Hobbit," Children's Theatre, Myriad Gardens, OKC

- 16-18 "Fiddler on the Roof," Theater Guild, Community Center, Bartlesville
- 17-19, 23-26 "El Grande De Coca-Cola," Carpenter Square Theatre, OKC
- 23-June 9 "Extremities," Jewel Box Theatre, OKC
- 30-June 22 "Diamond Studs," Gaslight Dinner Theatre, Tulsa

- JUNE**
- 7-16 "The Incredible Murder of Cardinal Tosca," Theatre Tulsa, Tulsa
 - 7-9, 13-16 "Celebration," Carpenter Square Theatre, OKC
 - 7-22 "Night Mother," American Theatre Co., Brook Theatre, Tulsa
 - 8-Aug. 24 "Trail of Tears," Cherokee Heritage Center, Tahlequah
 - 8-Aug. 24 "Oklahoma," Discoveryland!, Tulsa
 - 11-22 "Peter Pan," Lyric Theatre, OKC
 - 12-16, 19-23, 26-29 "Veronica's Room," Cabaret Supper Theatre, Fort Sill
 - 13-16, 19-22 "The Mousetrap," Stage Center, Myriad Gardens, OKC
 - 25-July 6 "Irene," Lyric Theatre, OKC
 - 27-July 20 "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," Gaslight Theatre, Tulsa



MUSIC/DANCE

- MAY**
- 1-4 Tri-State Music Festival, Enid
 - 2 & 4 "The Merry Widow," Tulsa Opera, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa
 - 3-5 Jazz Festival, Stage Center, Myriad Gardens, OKC
 - 4 "An Evening with Steve Allen," Bartlesville Symphony, Community Center, Bartlesville
 - 6 Tulsa Philharmonic Young People's Concert, Tulsa Zoo, Tulsa
 - 11-12 "Prairie Sampler," Prairie Dance Theatre, Stage Center, Myriad Gardens, OKC
 - 16 Tulsa Philharmonic, Byron Janis, pianist, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa
 - 24 Tulsa Philharmonic with Peter Nero, Community Center, Bartlesville
 - 25 Cab Calloway with Peter Nero, Tulsa Philharmonic, Performing Arts Center, Tulsa
- JUNE**
- 2,9,16,23 Sunday Twilight Concerts, Will Rogers Park, OKC
 - 8 Lawton Philharmonic, Summer Picnic Pops Concert, Great Plains Coliseum, Lawton
 - 14-16 OK Mozart Music Festival, Community Center, Bartlesville



FAIRS & FESTIVALS

- MAY**
- 2-5 Centennial Celebration, Lone Grove
 - 3-5 Fun Fest '85, Pryor
 - 4 Arts Festival, McLain-Rogers Park, Clinton
 - 4 Gallery on the Green, Courthouse Lawn, Walters
 - 4 Kolache Festival, Prague
 - 4 May Day Celebration, Vinita
 - 4 Springfest, Means Park, Weatherford
 - 4-5 Arts & Crafts Festival, Community Center, Cleveland
 - 4-5 Gilcrease Rendezvous, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa
 - 9-11 American Indian Art & Craft Exposition, Checotah
 - 10-12 Art Fest 10, Artist Studio NW, Guymon
 - 11 Nettie Davenport Day, Davenport
 - 11 Strawberry Festival, Stilwell
 - 11 Western Days Celebration, Central Park, Jenks
 - 12 National Wheat Harvest Festival, Sultan Park, Walters
 - 17-19 Mayfest, Main Mall & William Center, Tulsa
 - 17-18 Rooster Day Celebration, Broken Arrow
 - 18 Pioneer Days, Downtown Nowata
 - 24-25 Nardin Heritage Celebration, Nardin
 - 25 Birthday Celebration, Downtown Mulhall
 - 25-Sept. 1 Cherokee Square Arts & Crafts Fair (weekends), Tahlequah
 - 25 Memorial Day Celebration, Sulphur
 - 25-26 Italian Festival, McAlester
 - 25-27 Hookrafters Rug Show, Community Center, Grove
 - 25-27 Indian Art & Crafts Show, Coleman Theater, Miami
 - 30-June 1 Santa Fe Trail Daze, Boise City

- JUNE**
- 1 Nescatunga Arts Festival, Downtown Alva
 - 7-8 Disney Island Festival, Disney
 - 7-9 Harvest Days Celebration, Woodward
 - 7-9 Gusher Days Festival, Municipal Park, Seminole
 - 8 Pioneer Day Festival, Cleveland
 - 12-15 Western Days, Durant
 - 13-15 Summerfest, Courthouse Lawn, Wagoner
 - 14-15 Reunion Days Arts & Crafts Show, Stigler
 - 14-16 Creek Indian Festival, Creek Nation Omnplex, Okmulgee
 - 19-22 Owa-Chito Festival of the Forest, Beavers Bend State Park, Broken Bow
 - 20-22 Pecan Festival, Council House Square, Okmulgee
 - 21-23 Jubilation '85, Mohawk Park, Tulsa
 - 29 "Life: Be In It" Festival, Fuqua Park, Duncan
 - 29 Heart of OK Arts Festival, Courthouse Grounds, Purcell
 - 27-29 Green Corn Festival, Charlie Young Park, Bixby



INDIAN EVENTS

- MAY**
- 18 Benefit Powwow, Native American Center, OKC
 - 18-19 Kiowa Blackleggings Ceremonial, Indian City Dancegrounds, Anadarko
 - 25 Little Rabbit Dance Clan Celebration, Kiowa Tribal Complex, Carnegie
 - 31-June 2 Rogers County Cherokee Association Powwow, Claremore
 - 31-June 2 Indian Heritage Days, Miami

- JUNE**
- 14-16 12th Annual Powwow, Pottawatomie Tribal Grounds, Shawnee

- 14-16 Kiowa-Apache Blackfeet Ceremonial, Indian City Dancegrounds, Anadarko
- 15 Benefit Powwow, Native American Center, OKC
- 27-29 Cherokee Renaissance & Grand Council Meeting, Tahlequah
- 27-30 Native American Celebration, Jelsma Stadium, Guthrie



RODEOS & HORSE EVENTS

- MAY**
- 14 Charity Horse Show, Expo Square, Tulsa
 - 3-4 Tri-State Roundup Club Rodeo, Jay
 - 9-11 World's Toughest Rodeo, Expo Square, Tulsa
 - 9-11 Western Days Rodeo, Jenks
 - 11 Brass Ring Wild West Show, Creek Nation Omnplex, Okmulgee
 - 23-25 Four-way Rodeo, Rodeo Grounds, Pryor
 - 31-June 2 Anadarko Rodeo & Stampede, Anadarko

- JUNE**
- 6 Open Rodeo, County Rodeo Grounds, Sulphur
 - 13-16 Rodeo, Round-up Club Arena, Seminole
 - 14-16 Shortgrass Country Rodeo, Rodeo Arena, Sayre
 - 15-16 Ben Johnson Memorial Steer Roping, County Fairgrounds, Pawhuska
 - 19-23 OK High School Rodeo Finals, State Fairgrounds, OKC
 - 20-22 Frontier Rodeo, Jay Dalley Sports Arena, Poteau
 - 27-29 Rodeo, County Fairgrounds, Chickasha
 - 27-29 Washita Valley Pioneer Days Rodeo, Pauls Valley



SPECIAL EVENTS

- MAY**
- 1-June 23 Grand Tour of the Solar System, Kirkpatrick Planetarium, OKC
 - 3-5 OK Steam & Gas Engine Show, Steam Engine Park, Pawnee
 - 11 River Run, Tulsa
 - 13 Fore Tulsa Pro Am Charity Golf Event, Southern Hills Country Club, Tulsa
 - 16-20 Big Eight Baseball Championships, State Fairgrounds, OKC
 - 17-19 National Street Rod Association Great SW Nationals, Expo Square, Tulsa
 - 19-27 Plano Tackle Box Drop, Lake Texoma
 - 25 Roadrunner Marathon, Gage
 - 25 8-K Run & 25-mile Bike Race, Quartz Mountain State Park, Altus

- JUNE**
- 7-9 International Antique & Classic Car Auction, Expo Square, Tulsa
 - 8 Hydroplane Boat Races, Eufaula Cove, Eufaula
 - 8-23 Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute, Quartz Mountain State Park, Lone Wolf
 - 9 Bonne Bell Run (Women Only), 3rd & Main, Tulsa
 - 14-15 Hall of Fame Softball Classic, Eggeling Stadium, OKC
 - 20-23 Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey Circus, Myriad, OKC
 - 21-July 14 U.S. Parachute Finals, Davis Field, Muskogee
 - 21-23 Fly-in, Airport, Pauls Valley
 - 22-23 Sailing Regatta, Arrowhead Lodge, Eufaula
 - 26 Grand Lake Junior Championship, Cherokee Grove Golf Club, Grove

